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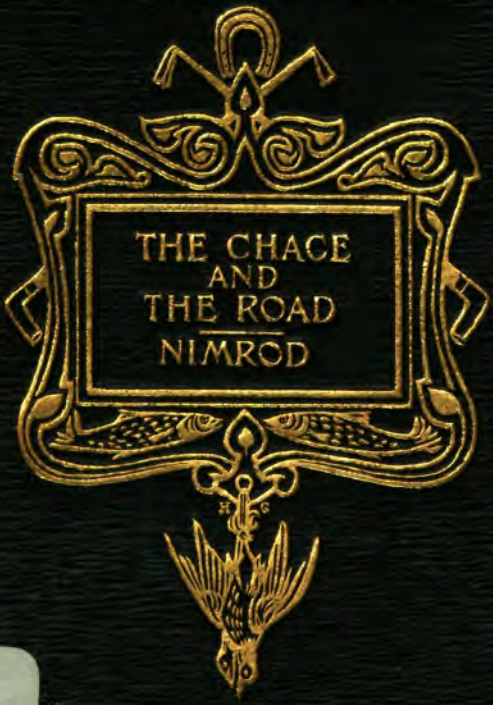
THE SPORTSMAN'S CLASSICS



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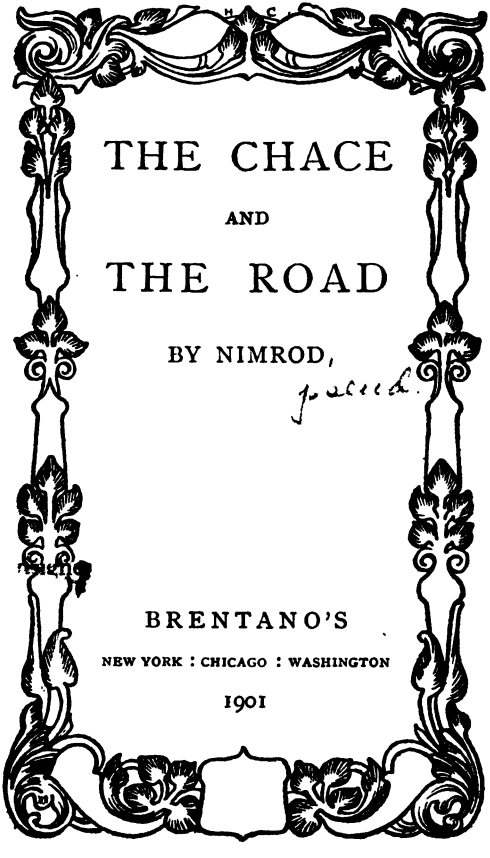
THE CHACE

AND

THE ROAD

THE CHACE

Charles James Apperley



THE CHACE

AND

THE ROAD

BY NIMROD,

BRENTANO'S

NEW YORK : CHICAGO : WASHINGTON

1901

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INTRODUCTION

AMONG the numerous English writers on the subject of Sporting, very few hold a higher position than does the writer who ultimately assumed the pseudonym of 'Nimrod.' He published about a dozen works, between the years 1831 and 1843. Some of these had previously appeared in the *Quarterly Review* and the *New Sporting Magazine*, and were unsigned. They related, generally speaking, to the Chace, the Road, and the Turf, and cognate subjects.

Charles James Apperley, for that was the real and full name of 'Nimrod,' was the second son of Thomas Apperley, Esq., of Wootton House, Gloucestershire, but is stated to have been born near Wrexham during

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1777. He received his education at Rugby. Young Apperley married early in life, and settled in Warwickshire, where he devoted himself to the pleasures of the Chace. At the age of forty-four—this was in 1821—he commenced to contribute to the *Sporting Magazine*; and in 1830 he deemed it judicious to leave the country and take up his residence in France.

'Nimrod' had now become well known to his contemporaries as a great authority on the points of both horses and hounds, and on everything connected with 'the noble science of fox-hunting'; and was generally regarded as a fairly good coachman and judge of driving, and 'had at any rate a long and practical acquaintance with the mails and stage-coaches running upon the great high roads which led to London.' His writings upon these subjects, therefore, were regarded as authoritative. The long interval of time which has elapsed since they were penned has detracted but little from their original value. The works of

'Nimrod' are held in high regard by all who are competent to judge.

The most important of 'Nimrod's' contributions to sporting literature are *The Chace*, *The Turf*, and *The Road*, and his *Life of John Mytton*. The first-mentioned work, in whole and in part, has passed through several editions, and been illustrated by H. Alken. This work was contributed, shortly after his removal to the Continent, to the *Quarterly Review*, where it appeared in three instalments, and was first published in book form in 1837 by the famous publishing house of Murray. They appeared anonymously.

The Chace was the first of this series of papers, and appeared in the periodical mentioned for March 1832, and was entitled 'English Fox-hunting.' It gives 'the famous description of an ideal run with the Quorn under Mr. Osbaldeston's mastership.'

The Road appeared in the next volume to that of *The Chace* in the *Quarterly*, and was ostensibly a review of Dr. Kitchener's

Travellers' Oracle, 3rd edition, 1828, and Jervis's *Horse and Carriage Oracle*, 1st edition, 1807, 3rd edition, 1828.

The present volume of 'The Sportsman's Classics' is a careful reprint of these two papers which have become English Sporting Classics.

The Turf appeared in the *Quarterly* for July 1833. Apperley was undoubtedly indefatigable in research for material for his literary work; and 'as a gentleman jockey he occasionally put in a not discreditable appearance at hunt-meetings.' On this subject, as on allied themes, 'Nimrod' wrote with a graphic pen.

The Turf will constitute the third volume of this series of reprints.

It may be added that 'Nimrod' returned to his native country. He died in Upper Belgrave Place, London, on May 19, 1843.

The head- and tail-pieces, title, and full-page illustrations are from the facile pen of Mr. Herbert Cole.

J. P. B.

THE CHACE

THE CHACE

'Listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill
Thro' the high wood echoing shrill.'

MILTON.

IN various old writers — *The Mayster of the Game*, for instance — we find lively pictures of the ancient English chace, which in many respects, no doubt, was of a more noble and manly nature than that of the present day. The wolf, the bear, the boar, were among the favourite beasts of 'venery'; and none can doubt that the habit of pursuing such animals, independently of giving vigour to the frame, and strength to the constitution, must have nourished that martial ardour and fearless intrepidity, which, when exerted in the field of battle, generally won the day for our

gallant ancestors. The hart, the stag, the hind, the roebuck, and the hare, are likewise constantly mentioned, as is also the wild or martin cat, now nearly extinct; but the fox does not appear to have been included in the list of the Anglo-Norman sportsman. The first public notice of this now much-esteemed animal occurs in the reign of Richard II., which unfortunate monarch gives permission, by charter, to the abbot of Peterborough to hunt the fox. In Twice's *Treatise on the Craft of Hunting* Reynard is thus classed:—

'And for to sette young hunterys in the way
To venery, I cast me fyrst to go:
Of which four bestes be, that is to say,
The hare, the herte, the wulf, and the wild boor.
But there ben other bestes five of the chase;
The buck the first, the seconde is the do;
The fox the third, which hath ever hard grace,
The forthe the martyn, and the last the roe.'

It is indeed quite apparent that, until at most a hundred and fifty years ago, the fox was considered an inferior animal of the chace—the stag, buck, and even hare, ranking before him. Previously to this period, he was generally taken in nets or hays, set on the outside of his earth: when

he *was* hunted, it was among rocks and crags, or woods inaccessible to horsemen; such a scene, in short, or very nearly so, as we have, drawn to the life, in Dandie Dinmont's primitive *chasse* in *Guy Mannering*. If the reader will turn to the author of Hudibras's essay, entitled *Of the Bumpkin, or Country Squire*, he will find a great deal about the hare, but not one word of the fox. What a revolution had occurred before Squire Western sat for his picture! About half-way between these pieces appeared Somerville's poem of *The Chace*, in which fox-hunting is treated of with less of detail, and much less of enthusiasm, than either stag-hunting or *hare-hunting*!

It is difficult to determine when the first regularly appointed pack of fox-hounds appeared among us. Dan Chaucer gives us the thing in *embryo*:—

'Aha, the fox! and after him they ran;
And eke with staves many another man.
Ran Coll our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerlond,
And Malkin with her distaff in her hond.
Ran cow and calf, and eke the veray hogges,
So fered were for berking of the dogges,
And shouting of the men and women eke,
They ronnen so, hem thought her hertes brake.'

At the next stage, no doubt, neighbouring farmers kept one or two hounds each, and, on stated days, met for the purpose of destroying a fox that had been doing damage in their poultry-yards. By and by, a few couples of strong hounds seem to have been kept by small country esquires, or yeomen, who could afford the expense, and they joined packs. Such were called trencher hounds—implying that they ran loose about the house, and were not confined in kennel. Of their breed it would be difficult to speak at this distance of time; but it is conjectured that they resembled the large broken-haired harriers now to be met with in the mountainous parts of Wales, which, on good scenting days, are nearly a match for anything by their perseverance and nose. Slow and gradual must have been the transition to the present elaborate system; but let us waive the *minutiæ* of sporting antiquarianship.[1]

[1] In a letter, dated February 1833, from the late Lord Arundel to the author of these papers, is the following interesting passage to sportsmen:—'A pack of fox-hounds were kept by my ancestor, Lord Arundel, between the years 1690 and 1700; and I have memo-

In no one instance has the modern varied from the ancient system of hunting more than in the hour of meeting in the morning. With our forefathers, when the roost cock sounded his clarion, they sounded their horn; throwing off the pack so soon as they could distinguish a stile from a gate, or, in other words, so soon as they could see to ride to the hounds. Then it was that the hare was hunted to her form by the trail, and the fox to his kennel by the drag. Slow as this system would now be deemed, it was a grand treat to the real sportsman. What, in the language of the chace, is called 'the tender-nosed hound,' had an opportunity of displaying himself to the inexpressible delight of his master; and

randa to prove that they occasionally hunted from Wardover Castle, in Wiltshire, and at Brimmer, in Hants, now Sir Edward Halse's, but then the occasional residence of Lord Arundel. These hounds were kept by my family until *about* the year 1745, when the sixth Lord Arundel died, when they were kept by his nephew, the Earl of Castle-Haven, until the death of the last Earl of that name, about the year 1782. The pack were then sold to the celebrated Hugo Meynell, Esq., of Quorndon Hall, Leicestershire; and hence it is possible they may have, in part, contributed to the establishment of that gentleman's fox-hunting fame.'

to the field—that is, to the sportsmen who joined in the diversion—the pleasures of the day were enhanced by the moments of anticipation produced by the drag. As the scent grew warmer, the certainty of finding was confirmed; the music of the pack increased; and, the game being up, away went the hounds 'in a crash.' Both trail and drag are at present but little thought of; hounds merely draw over ground most likely to hold the game they are in quest of, and thus, in a great measure, rely upon chance for coming across it; for if a challenge be heard, it can only be inferred that a fox has been on foot in the night—the scent being seldom sufficient to enable the hound to carry it up to his kennel. Advantages, however, as far as sport is concerned, attend the present hour of meeting in the field. Independently of the misery of riding many miles in the dark, which sportsmen of the early part of the last century were obliged to do, the game, when it is now aroused, is in a better state to encounter the great speed of modern hounds, having had time to digest the food which it has partaken of in the night, previously

to its being stirred. But it is only since the great increase of hares and foxes that the aid of the trail and drag could be dispensed with, without the frequent recurrence of blank days, which now seldom happen.

Compared with the luxurious ease with which the modern sportsman is conveyed to the field—either lolling in his chaise-and-four, or galloping along at the rate of twenty miles an hour on a hundred-guinea hack—the situation of his predecessor was all but distressing. In proportion to the distance he had to ride by starlight were his hours of rest broken in upon; and, exclusive of the time which that operation might consume, another serious one was to be provided for—this was, the filling his hair with powder and pomatum until it could hold no more, and forming it into a well-turned knot, or club, as it was called, by his valet, which cost commonly a good hour's work. The protecting mud-boot, the cantering hack, the second horse in the field, were luxuries unknown to him; and his well-soiled buckskins, and brown-topped boots, would have cut an indifferent figure in the presence of

a modern connoisseur by a Leicestershire cover-side. Notwithstanding all this, however, we are inclined strongly to suspect that, out of a given number of gentlemen taking the field with hounds, the proportion of really scientific sportsmen may have been in favour of the olden times.

In the horse called *the hunter*, a still greater change has taken place. The half-bred horse of the early part of the last century was, when highly broken to his work, a delightful animal to ride; in many respects more accomplished, as a hunter, than the generality of those of the present day. When in his best form, he was a truly shaped and powerful animal, possessing prodigious strength, with a fine commanding frame, considerable length of neck, a slight curve in his crest, which was always high and firm, and the head beautifully put on. Possessing these advantages, in addition to the very great pains taken with his mouth in the bitting, and an excellent education in the school or at the bar, he was what is termed a complete snaffle-bridle horse, and a standing as well as a flying leaper. Held well in hand—his rider stand-

ing up in the stirrups, holding him fast by the head, making the best of, and being able, from the comparatively slow rate at which hounds then travelled, to pick or choose his ground—such a horse would continue a chace of some hours' duration at the pace he was called upon to go, taking his fences well and safely to the last; and he would frequently command the then large sum of one hundred guineas. But all these accomplishments would never have enabled a horse of this description to carry the modern sportsman, who rides well up to hounds, on a good scenting day, over one of our best hunting countries. His strength would be exhausted before he had gone ten minutes, by the increased pace at which he would now be called upon to travel, but to which his breeding would be quite unequal; and his true symmetry, his perfect fencing, his fine mouth, and all his other *points*, would prove of very little avail. If ridden close to the hounds, he would be powerless and dangerous before he had gone across half a dozen Leicestershire enclosures.

The increased pace of hounds, and that of the horses that follow them, have an

intimate connection with each other, if not with the march of intellect. Were not the hounds of our day to go so fast as they do, they would not be able to keep clear of the crowd of riders who are now mounted on horses nearly equal to the racing pace. On the other hand, as the speed of hounds has so much increased, unless their followers ride speedy, and, for the most part, thorough-bred horses, they cannot see out a run of any continuance if the scent lies well. True it is that, at the present time, every Leicestershire hunter is not thorough-bred; but what is termed the cock-tail, or half-bred horse of this day, is a very different animal from that of a hundred years back. In those days, a cross between the thorough-bred, or perhaps *not quite thorough-bred*, horse, and the common draught-mare, was considered good enough to produce hunters equal to the speed of the hounds then used. There was not such an abundance of what may be termed the intermediate variety of the horse in the country—'pretty well-bred on each side the head'—which has of late years been in demand for the fast coaches of England, in which low-bred

horses have no chance to live. Mares of *this* variety, put to thorough-bred stallions, *and their produce crossed with pure blood*, create the sort of animal that comes *now* under the denomination of the half-bred English hunter, or cock-tail. These are also the horses which contend for our several valuable stakes, made for horses not thorough-bred, though, when brought to the post, they are sometimes so much like race-horses in their appearance and their pace, that it would be difficult to detect the blot in their pedigree. A prejudice long existed against thorough-bred horses for the field, particularly such as had once been trained to the course; and in some quarters it still lingers. It is argued by their opponents that the thinness of their skins makes them afraid of rough black-thorn fences, and that they lose their speed in soft, or what, in sporting language, is termed deep ground; also, that having been accustomed from their infancy to the jockey's hand, they lean upon their bits, as when in a race, and are therefore unpleasant to ride. Such of them as have been long in training may undoubtedly be subject to these objections,

and never become good and pleasant hunters; but when purchased young, and possessing strength and bone, they must have many counterbalancing advantages over the inferior-bred horse. So far from not making good leapers, the firmness of bone and muscle peculiar to this variety of the breed is prodigiously in favour of that desirable qualification. Indeed, it has been truly said of them, that they can often leap large fences when lower-bred horses cannot leap smaller ones, — the result of their superior wind when put to a quick pace.

Whoever wishes to see two distinct species of the horse in the most perfect state, should go to Newmarket and Melton-Mowbray—to the former for the race-horse, to the latter for the hunter. In no place upon the earth is *condition* attended to with so much care, or managed with such skill, as in this renowned metropolis of the fox-hunting world. Indeed, we conceive it would be useless to expect horses to live with hounds in such a country as Leicestershire, unless they were in condition to enable them to contend for a plate.

Melton-Mowbray generally contains from

two to three hundred hunters, in the hands of the most experienced grooms England can produce—the average number being ten to each sportsman residing there, although some of those who ride heavy, and rejoice in long purses, have from fourteen to twenty for their own use: the stud of the Earl of Plymouth for many years exceeded the last-mentioned number. It may seem strange, that one man should, under any circumstances, need so large a number of horses solely for his personal use in the field; and it must be admitted that few countries do require it. In Leicestershire, however, the universal practice is for each sportsman to have at least two hunters in the field on the same day,—a practice found to be economical, as it is from exhaustion, the effect of long-continued severe work, that the health of horses is most injured. And when it is also borne in mind, that hounds are to be reached from Melton, Leicester, etc., every day in the week,—that one horse out of six in every man's stud is, upon an average, lame, or otherwise unfit for work,—and that a horse should always have five days' rest after a

moderate, and at least seven or eight after a severe, run with hounds,—it will not seem surprising that ten or twelve hunters should be deemed an indispensable stud for a regular Leicestershire sportsman.

The stables and other conveniences for hunters in the town and neighbourhood are upon a very superior scale, and the greater part of the studs remain there all the year round; though, from the comparatively small quantity of arable land in the county of Leicester, and the very great demand for forage, oats and hay are always considerably dearer here than at any other place in England. The sum-total of expenses attending a stud of twelve hunters at Melton, including every outgoing, is, as nearly as can be estimated, one thousand pounds per annum. In all stables, the average outlay for the purchase of horses is great,—at least two hundred guineas each hunter; and, in some, the annual amount of wear and tear of horse-flesh is considerable.

At no distant date—within at most thirty years—Melton-Mowbray was an insignificant-looking little town. It is prettily situated in a rich vale, through which the

river Stoure passes, but had nothing an artist would have called a *feature* about it, except its beautiful church. But of late it has put on a very different appearance, owing to the numbers of comfortable houses which have been erected for the accommodation of its sporting visitors, who now spend not less, on an average, than fifty thousand pounds per annum on the spot. It stands on one of the great north roads, eighteen miles from Nottingham, and fifteen from Leicester; which latter place is also become a favourite resort of sportsmen, as it is well situated for the best part of the Quorn, and Lord Lonsdale's countries, and many of the favourite covers of the Atherstone (lately better known as Lord Anson's) country, can be reached from it.

The following description of the Old Club at Melton-Mowbray, so called in contradistinction to the New Club, some time since broken up, is given in one of Nimrod's letters in the *Old Sporting Magazine*, about ten years back:—

'The grand feature at Melton-Mowbray is the Old Club, which has been established about thirty-eight years, and owes its birth

to the following circumstances: Those distinguished sportsmen, the late Lord Forrester and Lord Delamere (then Messrs. Forrester and Cholmondeley), had been living for some years at Loughborough for the purpose of hunting with Mr. Meynell, and removed thence into Melton, where they took a house, and were joined by the late Mr. Smythe Owen, of Condover Hall, Shropshire. As this house, now known as the Old Club House, only contains four best bed-rooms, its members are restricted to that number. But the following sportsmen have, at different periods, belonged to the club: The Hon. George Germaine; Lords Alvanley and Brudenel; the Hon. Joshua Vanneck, now Lord Huntingfield; the Hon. Berkeley Craven; the late Sir Robert Leighton; the late Mr. Meyler; Messrs. Brommell, Vansittart, Thomas Aysheton Smith, Lindow, Langston, Maxse, Maher, Moore, Sir James Musgrave, and the present Lord Forrester—the four last-mentioned gentlemen forming the present club. There is something highly respectable in everything connected with the Melton Old Club. Not only is some of the best society

in England to be met with in their circle, but the members have been remarkable for living together on terms of the strictest harmony and friendship; and a sort of veneration has been paid by them to the recollection of the former members, as the following anecdotes will prove: The same plate is now in use which was purchased when the club was established (for there are none of the "*certamina divitiarum*,"—no ostentatious displays at the table of the Old Club, though everything is as good, of its kind, as a first-rate cook can produce, and the wines are of the best quality), and even trifles are regarded with a scrupulous observance. A small print of the late Samuel Chiffney, on "Baronet,"[1] was placed against the wall by the Hon. George Germaine, so distinguished as a most excellent sportsman, as well as a rider over a country or a race-course—in the latter accomplishment perhaps scarcely excelled by any gentleman jockey; and although, since it was first affixed, the room has undergone more than one papering and repairing, yet the same

[1] Baronet was a celebrated racer, belonging to George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales.

print, in the same frame, and *on the same nail*, still hangs in the same place.

> "The rivets were not found that joined us first,
> That do not reach us yet;—we were so mixed,
> We were one mass, we could not give or take
> But from the same, for he was I—I he."'

There have lately sprung up two junior clubs at Melton. The one called the New Club, occupying the house formerly the residence of Lord Alvanley, opposite that excellent inn called the George Hotel, is composed of the following eminent sportsmen: Mr. Errington, the master of the hounds; Count Matuchevitch, Mr. Massey Stanley, and Mr. Lyne Stevens. The other, at the house of the late Sir Harry Goodricke, is known as 'Lord Rokeby's Club,' and consists of Lords Rokeby and Eglinton, Sir Frederick Johnson, and Mr. Little Gilmour. The uninitiated reader would, perhaps, be surprised by an enumeration of the persons of rank, wealth, and fashion, who, during months of every year, resign the comforts and elegancies of their family mansions for a small house in some town or village of Leicestershire—to the eye of any one but a sportsman, nearly the ugliest

county in England. Amongst these devotees to fox-hunting are the following: The Earl of Wilton and his countess, in the town of Melton, at the house formerly occupied by the Earl of Darlington, to which he has greatly added, having purchased it: it is, perhaps, the most complete and splendid hunting-box at this time in England. At Little Poulton, the Earl of Darlington and family; at Leicester, Sir John Key and his lady; at Sowerby, Mr. and Mrs. John Villiers; at Quorndon, Mr. Farnham; and at the Hall, late Mr. Meynell's, Mr. Angerstein; at Ratcliffe, Captain Oliver and his lady; at Oakham, Mr. Curwin; at Lowesby, the Marquis of Waterford; at Barleythorpe, Mr. Bevan; at North Stoke, Mr. Turner; at the Lodge, near to Melton, the residence of the late Earl of Plymouth, are domiciled, in the season, Sir David and Lady Anne Baird; and nearer the town, the following well-known sportsmen: Mr. John Ewart, with his family, in the house formerly Lord Kinnaird's; Count Bathyany, *per se*; and in various hotels and lodgings are to be found, Lords Archibald Seymour, Mac-

donald, and Howth; Messrs. White, Spiers, Wharton, Rochford, Harvey Aston, Doyne, William Coke, John Campbell (of Saddel), Charles Lambe, etc.

Nor can any foreigner visiting this country, and a sportsman in his own, fail to be greatly surprised at the magnificence of our hunting establishments, whose sole object is the fox. The kennels and stable at Quorndon Hall, celebrated as the residence of the 'great Mr. Meynell,' and subsequently, until within the last few years, of every proprietor of the Quorndon or Quorn hounds, are especially worthy his attention. The former are perhaps the most extensive at the present day in England; among the latter is one holding twenty-eight horses, so arranged, that when a spectator stands in the centre of it, his eye commands each individual animal; and being furnished with seats, and lighted by powerful lamps, forms a high treat to the eye of a sportsman on a winter's evening; in addition to this, there are several loose boxes and an exercise ride, as it is called, under cover, for bad weather. The usual amount of the Quorn establishment has

been forty efficient hunters, and from sixty to one hundred couples of hounds. Mr. Osbaldeston, however, during his occupation of the country, had a still larger kennel—and no wonder, for it was his custom to turn out every day in the week, weather permitting; and, after Christmas, as the days increased in length, he had often two packs out on the same day—a circumstance before unheard of. This gentleman, however, is insatiable in his passion for the chace; and when we think what fatigue he must have been inured to whilst hunting his own hounds six days a week, in such a county as Leicestershire, for a succession of seasons, we read with less surprise his late Herculean feat of riding fifty four-mile heats over Newmarket heath, in the short space of eight hours, and in the face of most tempestuous weather!

Four packs of fox-hounds divide this far-famed county of Leicester: namely, Mr. Forester's, late the Duke of Rutland's; the Earl of Lonsdale's; the Atherstone, late the Earl of Lichfield's, afterwards Sir John Gerard's, but now Mr. Applewaite's; and what were so long called the Quorn,

now Mr. Errington's, but lately Sir Harry Goodricke's, who built a kennel for them at Thrussington, half-way between Melton and Leicester, which situation is more in the centre of the country than Quorn, where they had previously been kept for the period of Mr. Meynell's hunting. The county of Leicester, however, does not of itself find room for all these packs: parts of Rutlandshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Warwickshire, are also included in their beat.

Our readers are doubtless aware that such portion of a country as is hunted by any one pack of hounds is technically called their *country*; and of all the *countries* in the world, the Quorn certainly bears the bell. This superiority arises from the peculiar nature of the soil, which, being for the most part good, is highly favourable to scent; the immense proportion of grazing land in comparison with that which is ploughed; and the great size of the enclosures, many of which run to from sixty to one hundred acres each. The rarity of large woods in this part of Leicestershire is also a great recommenda-

tion to it as a hunting country; while it abounds in furze-brakes, or gorse-covers, as they are termed, for the rent of which a considerable annual sum (nearly one thousand pounds) is paid to the owners. Independently of these, what are termed artificial covers are made with stakes, set at a certain height from the ground for the grass to grow over them; but they are very inferior to the others, being difficult for hounds to draw. The subscription to the Quorn hounds has varied from two thousand to four thousand pounds per annum;[1] but Sir Harry Goodricke bore the whole expense of them himself.

One of the most striking features in the aspect of the chosen regions of English fox-hunting is the formidable *ox-fence*, rendered necessary by the difficulty of keeping fatting cattle within their pastures, during the season of the œstrus or gad-fly. It consists of—first, a wide ditch, then a sturdy black-thorn hedge, and at least two yards beyond that a strong rail, about four feet high: to

[1] Sir Bellingham Graham alone received the last-named sum. That now given to Mr. Errington is about two thousand five hundred pounds.

clear all these obstacles, from whichever side they may be approached, is evidently a great exertion for a horse. What is termed the bulfinch-fence (still more common in these districts) is a quickset hedge of perhaps fifty years' growth, with a ditch on one side or the other, and so high and strong that horses cannot clear it. The sportsman, however, charging this at nearly full speed, succeeds in getting to the other side, when the bushes close after him and his horse, and there is no more appearance of their transit than if a bird had hopped through. Horses unaccustomed to these fences seldom face them well at first; perhaps nothing short of the emulation which animates their riders, and the courage created in the noble animals themselves by the presence of the hounds, would induce them to face such things at all. Timber-fences, such as rails, stiles, and gates, but particularly rails, are oftener leaped in Leicestershire than in any other country, by reason of the great height which the quickset fences attain—a height which, in some places, nothing but a bird can surmount: brooks also abound, amongst the

widest of which are the Whissendine; the Smite, or Belvoir; one under Stanton Wood; another under Norton by Galby; and a fifth near Woodwell Head.

At the conclusion of the last century, Mr. Meynell was master of these Quorn hounds, since which time they have been in the hands of the following conspicuous sportsmen: Earl Sefton, the late Lord Foley, Mr. Thomas Aysheton Smith, Sir Bellingham Graham, Mr. Osbaldeston, Lord Southampton, the late Sir Harry Goodricke, Sir Francis Holyoake Goodricke, and Mr. Errington, the second son of Sir Thomas Stanley, Bart., of Cheshire, who now has them.

The town of Melton furnishes an interesting scene on each hunting morning. At rather an early hour are to be seen groups of hunters, the finest in the world, setting out in different directions to meet different packs of hounds. Each sportsman sends forward two. On one is mounted a very light but extremely well-dressed lad, who returns home on his master's cover hack, or in the dickey of his carriage, if he has happened to be carried to cover in the

more luxurious fashion. On the other hunter is a personage of a very different description. This is what is called the 'second-horse man'; he rides the second horse, which is to carry his master with the hounds after his having had one, or part of one, chace on the first. This description of servant is by no means easy to procure; and he generally exhibits in his countenance and demeanour something like a modest assurance that he possesses qualities of importance. In short, he must have some brains in his head; be a good horseman, with a light hand; be able to ride very well to hounds; and, above all, he must have a good eye to, and a thorough knowledge of, a country, to enable him to give his master a chance of changing his horse in a run, and not merely when it is over. Lord Sefton brought this second-horse system into fashion at the time he hunted Leicestershire, when Jack Raven, a light weight, and son of his huntsman, the celebrated John Raven, huntsman to the still more celebrated Mr. Meynell, used to ride one of his thousand-guinea hunters in his wake—if we may so express ourselves

—in the field, to which he changed his seat at the first convenient opportunity. The system, however, has been improved upon since then. The second-horse man now rides to points, instead of following the hounds, and thus often meets his master at a most favourable moment, when his good steed is sinking, with one that has not been out of a trot. There is much humanity as well as comfort in this arrangement; for at the pace hounds now go over grass countries, horses become somewhat distressed under heavy weights in a short time after the chace begins, when the scent lies well, and they are manfully ridden up to the pack.

About an hour and a half after the servants are gone forward with the hunters, a change of scene is to be observed at Melton. Carriages and four appear at some doors; at others very clever, and, most commonly, thorough-bred hacks, led gently in hand, ready for their owners to mount. The by-roads of this country being bad for wheels, the hack is often the better conveyance of the two—always, indeed, unless the fixture be at a place on, or not far from,

a turnpike road; and twelve or fourteen miles are generally performed by him within the hour.

The *style* of your Meltonian fox-hunter has long distinguished him above his brethren of what he calls the *provincial* chace. When turned out of the hands of his valet, he presents the very *beau-ideal* of his *caste*. The exact Stultz-like fit of his coat, his superlatively well-cleaned leather breeches and boots, and the generally apparent high breeding of the man, can seldom be matched elsewhere; and the most cautious sceptic on such points would satisfy himself of this fact at one single inspection.

Before Leicestershire acquired its present ascendant rank in the scale of sport, it was hunted by what were called the Noel hounds, which afterwards became the property of the Lonsdale family; but, in those early days, this county wore, to the eye of a sportsman, a very different appearance from that which it now presents. A great portion of the land was unenclosed; neither was there a tenth part of the furze-covers with which it now abounds. The foxes, on

the other hand, were wilder then than they are at present, and runs of longer duration than those of later times were, on an average, the result. Game was not so plentiful as it now is; consequently foxes had farther to travel for their usual provender, which trained them for runs of extraordinary length; and they were wilder, from the wilder nature of the country in which they were bred. It was, however, reserved to Mr. Meynell to render famous the county of Leicester as a hunting country. He was, doubtless, the most successful sportsman of his own time, nor has he been surpassed by any who have trodden in his steps; although it may be admitted he has had his equals in some departments of 'the craft.' It is a great mistake to fancy that a fool will ever make a first-rate figure even in fox-hunting; and, in truth, this father of the modern chace was anything but a fool. He was a man of strong and vigorous mind, joined with much perseverance, as well as ardour in his favourite pursuit, and bringing faculties to bear upon sport, as a *science*, which would have distinguished themselves in any walk of life to which he

might have applied them. As a breeder of hounds he displayed a perfect judgment: the first qualities he looked for were fine noses and stout running; a combination of strength with beauty, and steadiness with high mettle. His idea of perfection of shape was summed up in 'short backs, open bosoms, straight legs, and compact feet.' Although he did not hunt his hounds himself, yet he was one of the boldest, as well as most judicious horsemen of his time; but this was only a minor qualification. His knowledge of hunting was supreme, and several of his maxims are in force to the present hour. He was a great advocate for not hurrying hounds in their work; and having, perhaps, unparalleled influence over his field, he was enabled to prevent his brother sportsmen from pressing on the hounds when in difficulties—himself being the first to keep aloof: in chace, no man rode harder.

It was in his day that the hard riding, or, we should rather say, quick riding, to hounds, which has ever since been practised, was first brought into vogue. The late Mr. Childe, of Kinlet Hall, Shropshire

—a sportsman of the highest order, and a great personal friend of Mr. Meynell—is said to have first set the example, and it was quickly followed by the leading characters of the Quorn hunt.[1] This system has not only continued, but has gained ground; and the art of riding a chace may be said to have arrived at a state of perfection quite unknown at any other period of time. That a drawback from sport, and occasional loss of foxes, are often the results of this dashing method of riding to hounds, every sportsman must acknowledge; as an old writer on hunting has observed, 'The emulation

[1] Among the foremost of these were, the present Earl of Jersey, then Lord Villiers; the late Lord Forester, then Mr. Cecil Forester; Lord Delamere, then Mr. Cholmondeley; the Honourable George Germaine; Earl Sefton, Lord Huntingfield, then the Honourable Joshua Vanneck; the late Lords Charles Somerset, Maynard, and Craven; Lord Lynedoch, then Colonel Graham; the late Lords Foley and Wenlock (then Sir Robert Lawley); Honourables Robert Grosvenor, Berkeley Craven, and Martin Hawke; Sir John Shelley, Sir Henry Peyton, and the late Sir Stephen Glynn; General Tarleton; Messrs. Loraine Smith, Childe, Charles Meynell, Harvey Aston, Lowth, Musters, Lambton, Bennet, Hawkes, Lockley, Thomas Aysheton Smith, Lindow, Jacob Wardell, *cum multis aliis.*

of leading, in dogs and their masters, has been the ruin of many a good cry.' One circumstance, however, has greatly tended to perfect the system of riding well up, and this is the improved condition of hunters.[1] Of Mr. Meynell's time two celebrated chaces are recorded in print: one of an hour and twenty minutes without a check; and the other, two hours and fifty minutes without a cast. Only two horses carried their riders throughout the first run, and only one went to the end of the second; both foxes were killed, and *every hound* was present at the death of each. We may venture to say, had the two runs we have alluded to taken place within the last few years, this superiority in the condition of the hounds over the horses would by no means have been maintained.

We wish we could gratify such of our

[1] The advantages of the new system of preparing the hunter for the field have been so clearly demonstrated by the author of these papers, in his Letters on the Condition of Hunters, Riding to Hounds, etc., that the old one of turning him to grass in the summer, and destroying that condition which it had taken months to procure, is nearly, if not totally, exploded in the studs of all the hard riders of the present day.

readers as are sportsmen with the date and origin of our best packs of fox-hounds, as well as the names and character of their owners; but our limits will not allow us to go into much detail. Perhaps the oldest fox-hound blood in England at this time is to be found in the kennel of the Earl of Lonsdale, at Cottesmore. The Noels, whom this family succeeded, were of ancient standing in the chace; and the venerable peer himself has now superintended the pack for nearly fifty years, with a short interregnum of three or four years, when Sir Gilbert Heathcote had them.

Lord Yarborough's kennel can likewise boast of very old blood, that pack having descended, without interruption, from father to son for upwards of one hundred and fifty years.

The hounds, late Mr. Warde's, sold to Mr. Horlock a few years since for two thousand guineas, claim a high descent, having much of the blood of Lord Thanet's and Mr. Elwes's packs, which were in the possession of the Abingdon family, at Rycot, for at least three generations, and hunted Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

Mr. Warde was a master of fox-hounds during, as we believe, the yet unequalled period of fifty-seven years in succession. During this time he sold his pack to Lord Spencer; but reserved three couples of bitches, from which he raised another pack, and thus never lost sight of his old blood.

The late Earl Fitzwilliam comes very near Mr. Warde as an old master of fox-hounds. Soon after Mr. Warde purchased his first pack of the Honourable Captain Bertie, this peer bought the one called the Crewe and Foley, which had been very long established in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire; and he kept them to his death —nearly fifty years—and they are now in the kennel of the present Earl.

The Belvoir hounds are also a very old established pack, but had an interval during the minority of the present Duke of Rutland, when in the hands, first of Sir Carnaby Haggerstone, and afterwards of Mr. Percival, brother of the late Lord Egmont.

The Duke of Beaufort's are another justly celebrated pack, now in possession of the third generation; they date from the time of Lord Fitzwilliam's taking the Crewe and

Foley hounds, which made an opening in that part of Oxfordshire which the Duke now hunts.

Fox-hounds have been kept at Raby Castle, Durham, by the present Duke of Cleveland and his uncle, the late Duke, for more than a century; and his Grace officiated as huntsman to his pack for nearly forty seasons, still following them to the field.

The Earl of Scarborough's late pack, now Mr. Foljambe's, hunting the Collingworth country, claims also an early date; and among the other old masters of fox-hounds now alive, the names of Sir Richard Pulesston, the late Lord Middleton, the Earl of Harewood, Mr. Villebois, Mr. Ralph Lambton, Mr. Musters, and the Duke of Grafton, stand next on the list. The late Sir Thomas Mostyn was in the uninterrupted possession of fox-hounds for upwards of forty years; the late Mr. Chute, of Hampshire, kept them at least thirty years; and that superexcellent sportsman, Mr. Musters, has already seen out a similar period.

With the exception of these and a few others, the packs of English fox-hounds

have changed masters so often within the last fifty years, that it is almost impossible to trace them, either in blood or possession. However, the most valuable kennels of the present day are those of the Dukes of Rutland, Beaufort, and Cleveland, Lord Fitzwilliam, Messrs. Ralph Lambton and Osbaldeston (now Mr. Harvey Combe's). Mr. Warde has been remarkable for the great bone, size, and power of the hounds he has bred. With the exception of the Duke of Cleveland's and Mr. Villebois's *large* packs (so called in contradistinction to packs consisting of their smaller hounds, which these eminent sportsmen bring into the field on the alternate days), no hounds of the present day equal his in this respect. His logic on the subject is incontrovertible. 'You may at pleasure,' says this distinguished sportsman, 'diminish the size and power of the animal you wish to breed; but it is difficult to increase, or even preserve them, adhering to the same breed.' Many thought that Mr. Warde's hounds looked to some disadvantage, owing to their generally carrying a good deal of flesh, which, however, he considered—as did also the celebrated

Tom Rose, the Duke of Grafton's late huntsman, and father of the present—absolutely essential to those which, like his, hunted strong woodland countries. To the eye of a sportsman, it is certain they always afforded a high treat, as the power and fine symmetry of the fox-hound were apparent at first sight; and almost every kennel in the south of England, and several in the north, are now proud to acknowledge their obligations to the blood of John Warde—*the Father of the Field.*

The following sketch of honest Old Tom is copied from a late number of the *Northampton Herald*, with a few additional particulars by the friend who has kindly forwarded it to us, and who had long known him, and was able to appreciate his character. It is but an imperfect sketch, he observes, and hardly does Old Tom justice:—

'Poor Tom has at length gone to the place where all things are forgotten. For many years have I known him well, and safely can I aver that a more honest and worthy man never sat on a saddle, or ever cheered a hound. He had been from his

infancy in the family of the Duke of Grafton. It is related of him, that Joe Smith, who had the care of the old Duke's hounds, whilst hunting one day at Staen, near Brackley, heard a boy hallooing crows, and was so pleased with his voice that he took him into the stable. Be that as it may, he hunted the Grafton pack for nearly half a century. As it is much easier to pick a hole than mend one, so many, who were unacquainted with the nature of the country, used ofttimes to be not very scrupulous in their remarks as to his management. No one knew what hounds ought to be better than Tom; but, as he frequently used to say, "a man must breed his pack to suit his country." His hounds were supposed to be wild, and to have too much fly in them; or, according to his phrase, "*a leetle in a hurry.*" They certainly were so in a degree; but, in the ungovernable woodlands he had to hunt, how many foxes would he have caught had he not lifted them and thrown them in at head, with a bad fox? One fox would have lasted him a season. This system, doubtless, would make them wild in the open, but in a woodland country what other system is

to be pursued? Knowing that they had a good deal of fling in them, Tom could not bear the sight of a red coat. The Pytchley wild-boys, who were ever for a scurry in the morning, used to indulge Tom with their company whenever they met in the open, and not being accustomed (when at home) to give them "much room," used to drive them over it most unmercifully, and generally soon lost their first fox for them. As soon, however, as Tom's company had left him, or he had left them, by slipping down-wind with a few farmers and a field he could control, no hounds would sooner settle to their scent, or make more of it. If the scent would let them, none could twist him up sooner. Tom had one failing (and who has not?), which was, that he was too strongly prejudiced in favour of his own sort, and thereby lost the advantage which is derived from judiciously crossing, and which has so mainly contributed to the improvement of hounds in the present day. He had generally many lame hounds, which arose not from any fault of his, but from the dampness of the kennel, in which there arose upright springs; which (whatever may

be the case now) were not cured in his time. Though not an elegant, he was a capital horseman, and no one got better to his hounds. He did not like either a difficult or a raw horse, and he was not what is called a bruising rider; but he well knew the pace his horse was going, and always kept something in him. He did not like cramming him at large fences; but, like his inimitable pupil, Charles King, would always let any aspiring rider break the binders for him, and would rather get his horse's hind legs into the middle of a fence and make him creep through it, than let him jump.

'He had a sharp eye for a gap, or the weakest place in a fence, and could bore a hole through a black, dark double hedge better than most men. In the latter part of his life, he had a propensity highly disagreeable to a horseman's eye: he used to poke his horse on the head till he frightened him out of his senses, held him too hard, and frequently made him jump short, either before or behind. The consequence was, he often spoilt his beauty in a scramble, or lay on his back, as the penalty of his

cowardice. However, he got well to his hounds without upsetting his horse; and when he was with them he knew well when to stir them, and when to let them alone.

'Some five-and-thirty years ago, no pack was better appointed. The horses came chiefly from the racing stud, and all the men were well mounted. Dick Forster[1] and Ned Allen, then both in high feather, were of the first order of the profession (*Jackett*, too, was a famous assistant, and a fine rider), quick, active, and light, and always ready to play into one another's hands. As many a flower blows unseen, so had these hounds many a fine day's sport that was hardly ever heard of. With no one out but "*Old Beau*," with his low-crowned hat, black top-boots, one steel spur; his groom, Luke, in his twilled fustian frock, on the second horse; and a few old potterers like myself,—I have seen many a run, the recollection of which warms the expiring embers of my old age. Tom had a fine voice, which he, however,

[1] Now huntsman to Mr. Villebois, in Hampshire.

never used unnecessarily; and he scarcely ever blew his horn, except to get them out of a cover when the fox was away. As long as fox-hunting is followed by Englishmen, so long will the name of Old Tom Rose be cherished with the fondest recollections.'

Sir Richard Puleston is celebrated as a judicious breeder of hounds, and his blood has likewise been highly valued in several of our best kennels, amongst which is the Duke of Cleveland's, to whom Sir Richard sold a very large draft some years since, and also that of the Fife. The late Mr. Corbet, a very considerable breeder of hounds, always bowed to his superior judgment in this department of the science.

The most celebrated *breeders*, however, of this day, are the Dukes of Rutland and Beaufort, and Mr. Ralph Lambton; and Mr. Osbaldeston's blood, although himself no longer the owner of hounds, is *de facto* in the highest repute in the hunting world. A few years back, he had nearly forty couples of hounds at work at one time, by one sire—his Furrier.

The following testimony to the character of the late Duke of Beaufort, and his fox-hounds, appeared in a late number of the *New Sporting Magazine*, from the pen of Nimrod :—

'Yet it is as a master of fox-hounds that it is within my province to speak of the late Duke of Beaufort; and, from the many years' experience I had of his Grace in the field, I feel myself in some measure competent to the task. I need scarcely say I was always an admirer of his hounds, although I could not like his country. The gradual improvement I saw in the former, in defiance of all the disadvantages of the latter, convinced me that there was a system at work highly worthy of my consideration—a directing hand *somewhere* which must eventually lead to perfection. But whence this directing hand I was for a long time unable to discover. I doubted it being that of the Duke, not from a mistrust of his capacity, but because I had reason to believe the numerous avocations of his station prevented his attending to the minutiæ of a kennel;—although I did not consider his Grace a sportsman of the

very first class, in which his hounds certainly stood. I doubted it being that of Philip Payne, his huntsman, for, to appearance, a duller bit of clay was never moulded by Nature. But we should not judge from appearances, and I lived to confess my error. There was about Philip a steady observance of *circumstances*, which, increasing with the experience of their results, was more useful to him, as a breeder of fox-hounds,, than the learning and talent of a Porson. His observation alone taught him, that in seeking to produce excellence in animals, we have the best prospect of success in the election of those to breed from which have individually exhibited the peculiar qualities we require from them. Having availed ourselves of those in a kennel, a combination of strength and symmetry—which we call beauty—produces the perfect hound; at least as nearly so as the somewhat imperfect law of nature will allow of.'

Persons who are not sportsmen may be at a loss to estimate the annual expenses of a pack of fox-hounds, hunting our first-rate countries; and, perhaps, equally so to

account for such large sums being expended in such pursuits.[1]

Hay and oats, and, consequently, oatmeal, being very much cheaper now than they were during the war-prices, of course these

[1] The following are the items of expenses laid down by Colonel Cooke in his *Observations on Fox-hunting*, published a few years since. The calculation supposes a four-times-a-week country; but it is generally below the mark :—

Fourteen horses	£700
Hounds' food, for fifty couples	275
Firing	50
Taxes	120
Two whippers-in, and feeder	210
Earth-stopping	80
Saddlery	100
Farriery, shoeing, and medicine	100
Young hounds purchased, and expenses at walks	100
Casualties	200
Huntsman's wages and his horses	300
	£2235

Of course, countries vary much in expense from local circumstances, such as the necessity for change of kennels, hounds sleeping out, etc., etc. In those which are called hollow countries, consequently abounding in earths, the expense of earth-stopping is heavy; and Northamptonshire is of this class. In others, a great part of the foxes are what is termed stub-bred (bred above ground), which circumstance reduces the amount of this time.

expenses are diminished: but, even at present, we understand that, in the best establishments, very little is left out of four thousand pounds at the end of the year, when all contingent charges are liquidated; and we have reason to know that several greatly outstrip even this sum, perhaps to the extent of one-half in addition. The late Sir Harry Goodricke had eighty couples of hounds in his kennel, and forty-four hunters in his stables; and we believe that his predecessors, Lord Southampton, Mr. Osbaldeston, and Sir Bellingham Graham, even exceeded this measure of establishment.

The price of hounds is, perhaps, not generally known. Thirty years ago, Sir Richard Puleston sold his to the Duke of Bedford for seven hundred, and, fifteen years since, Mr. Corbet's were sold to Lord Middleton for twelve hundred guineas. A well-known good pack will, in these times, command a thousand guineas;—those of Lord Tavistock (the Oakley), to Sir Harry Goodricke; Mr. Nicholl's to the Earl of Kintore; and Sir Richard Sutton's to Mr. Thomas Aysheton Smith, have been sold

for that sum within the last few years; and those of Mr. Warde, as we have already said, for double that sum. But a very few years back, indeed, Mr. Osbaldeston sold *ten couples* of hounds for the first-named sum to the late Lord Middleton; and we have reason to believe he had hounds in his kennel for which he would not have taken two hundred guineas apiece. Knowing all this, one can make every allowance for the angry feeling and fears of their owners when they see the chance of their being ridden over and destroyed in chace. Good hounds are not easily replaced; and it is on this account, that in the hard-riding countries, and where the covers are small, seldom more than sixteen or seventeen couples form a pack.

The recent retirement of the Duke of Rutland from the field has been felt to leave a vacuum in the hunting world. Those hounds are now in the possession of a very popular young nobleman, Lord Forester, and his Grace subscribes one thousand two hundred pounds per annum towards their support; but the Duke himself no longer hunts, neither is there the

annual assemblage of sportsmen that was wont to be within the walls of Belvoir Castle. These are circumstances which have caused much regret; for his Grace retires with the good name of all the fox-hunting population. He 'did the thing' with princely magnificence, both in-doors and out; and if materials had been sought for to furnish a faithful representation of the style and grandeur of the genuine English nobleman, giving a fair part of his attention to the arrangements of the chace, we have reason to believe they would have all been met with at Belvoir.

Although most foreigners express vast surprise that we should go to such expense in hunting the fox, unattended by the parade of the continental *chasse*, yet several of them have of late been induced to make their appearance in Leicestershire; and some few have shown that, had they been born Englishmen, and rightly initiated in the art, they must have been conspicuous characters in the field. The performances of Count Sandore, an Hungarian nobleman, who resided one year at Melton-Mowbray, on a visit to Lord Alvanley, have already

met the public eye; and his daring horsemanship, and consequent mishaps, formed the subject of an amusing tale. From a ludicrous description given of them by himself, a series of pictures were painted by Mr. Ferneley, of Melton-Mowbray, representing him in as extraordinary and perilous situations as the imagination of man could have conceived. Fiction, however, was not resorted to, every scene being a real one; and the Count—the delight of the Meltonians —carried them to his own country, on his return, together with some English mares to produce hunters, having had a good taste of the breed. He was mounted by Mr. Tilbury, a celebrated horse-dealer in London, who found him a stud of eight horses for the season, for the moderate sum of one thousand pounds, including every contingent expense, even to the turnpike gates. Count Bathyany is a resident at Melton; Counts Hahn and Bassewitz, from Germany, spent part of one season there; and Count Matuchevitch, the Russian minister, is residing there now. His Excellency has ten hunters of his own, rides hard, and is much esteemed by the

Meltonians, and all sportsmen in the neighbourhood.[1] During the visit of Don Miguel to the Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsay, a few years back, he went out with the Vine hounds (late Mr. Chute's), to which his Grace is a subscriber. He rode a celebrated hunter of the late King's, and gallantly did he put him along. It too often happens, however, on such occasions, when sport is most anxiously desired for the amusement of some distinguished individual, that the game runs short, or the

[1] Several French sportsmen have lately visited Leicestershire; the best performer of them, perhaps, is M. Normandie. M. de Vaublan and M. d'Hinnisdale have both had a taste of Melton; and, in 1834, the last-named gentleman spent the winter at Leamington, in Warwickshire. This was the year in which M. Vaublan was in Leicestershire, where, although very indifferently mounted by Tilbury, and experiencing many falls, he was almost always to be seen at the finish of a good run. At all events, he went as long as his horse could go, and was considered a very good horseman. M. de Normandie has hunted much in Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Dorsetshire, being at this time domiciled at Catestock, in the latter county, the headquarters of Mr. Farquharson's hunt, with three thorough-bred young ones in his stud—namely, Ciudad, Rouncival, and Rodrigo—which no doubt will soon become perfect *in his hands*, for no man need have better.

scent lies faintly. Such was a good deal the case in this instance, although there was running enough to show that Miguel would have stopped at nothing that might have come in his way to oppose his being with the hounds. Of his qualities as a sportsman there was little opportunity of judging, but he certainly showed himself to be a horseman of a superior caste: insomuch that those who observed him were little astonished with the accounts of his personal activity in the first weeks after his return to Portugal:—he, at that crisis, is said to have ridden six hundred miles in six successive days; a feat which those who have travelled on Portuguese roads will appreciate. So much for, we fear, one of the last persons to whom anybody would think of applying Wordsworth's eulogium on 'the Shepherd Lord':

> 'In him the savage virtue of the chace,
> Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts, were dead.'

It is a hackneyed enough remark, that both ancient and modern writers make sad work of it when they attempt a description of heaven. To describe a run with

fox-hounds is not a much easier task; but to make the attempt with any other county than Leicestershire in our eye, would be giving a chance away. Let us then suppose ourselves to have been at Ashby Pasture, in the Quorn country, with Mr. Osbaldeston's hounds, in the year 1826, when that pack was at the height of its well-merited celebrity. Let us also indulge ourselves with a fine morning in the first week of February, and at least two hundred well-mounted men by the cover's side. Time being called—say a quarter past eleven, nearly our great-grandfathers' dinner-hour — the hounds approach the furze-brake, or the gorse, as it is called in that region. '*Hark in, hark!*' with a slight cheer, and perhaps one wave of his cap, says Mr. Osbaldeston, who long hunted his own pack, and in an instant he has not a hound at his horse's heels. In a very short time the gorse appears shaken in various parts of the cover—apparently from an unknown cause, not a single hound being for some minutes visible. Presently one or two appear, leaping over some old furze which they cannot push through, and exhibit to the field their

glossy skins and spotted sides. 'Oh you beauties!' exclaims some old Meltonian, rapturously fond of the sport. Two minutes more elapse; another hound slips out of cover, and takes a short turn outside, with his nose to the ground and his stern lashing his side—thinking, no doubt, he might touch on a drag, should Reynard have been abroad in the night. Hounds have no business to *think*, *thinks* the second whipper-in, who observes him; but one crack of his whip, with 'Rasselas, Rasselas, where are you going, Rasselas? *Get to cover*, *Rasselas*!' and Rasselas immediately disappears. Five minutes more pass away. 'No fox here,' says one. 'Don't be in a hurry,' cries Mr. Cradock;[1] 'they are drawing it beautifully, and there is rare lying in it.' These words are scarcely uttered, when the cover shakes more than ever. Every stem appears alive, and it reminds us of a corn-field waving in the wind. In two minutes the sterns of some more hounds

[1] This gentleman resided within the limits of the Quorn hunt, and kindly superintended the management of the covers. He has lately paid the debt of nature.

are seen 'flourishing'[1] above the gorse. '*Have at him there*,' holloas the Squire[2]—the gorse still more alive, and hounds leaping over each other's backs. '*Have at him there again*, my good hounds; a fox for a hundred!' reiterates the Squire, putting his finger in his ear, and uttering a scream which, not being set to music, we cannot give here. Jack Stevens (the first whipper-in) looks at his watch. At this moment 'John White,' 'Val. Maher,' 'Frank Holyoake' (who will pardon us for giving them their *noms-de-chasse*[3]), and two or three more of the fast ones, are seen creeping gently on towards a point at which they think it probable he may break. 'Hold

[1] Technical for the motion of a hound's stern or tail when he first feels a scent, but is not sufficiently confident to *own*, or *acknowledge* it.

[2] When Mr. Osbaldeston had the Quorn hounds, three of the four packs which hunted in the same county with his own were the property of noblemen; so, for the sake of distinction, his friends conferred on him the familiar title of 'the Squire.'

[3] John White, Esq., of Park Hall, Derbyshire; Valentine Maher, Esq., a member of the Old Club; and Francis Lyttleton Holyoake, Esq., of Studley Castle, Worcestershire, but now Sir Francis Holyoake Goodricke, having succeeded to the title and estates of the late Sir Harry Goodricke.

hard, there,' says a sportsman; but he might as well speak to the winds. 'Stand still, gentlemen! *pray* stand still,' exclaims the huntsman; he might as well say so to the sun. During the time we have been speaking of, all the field have been awake —gloves put on—cigars thrown away—the bridle-reins gathered well up into the hand, and hats pushed down upon the brow.

At this interesting period a Snob,[1] just arrived from a very *rural* country, and unknown to any one, but determined to witness the start, gets into a conspicuous situation: 'Come away, sir!' holloas the master (little suspecting that the Snob may be nothing less than one of the Quarterly Reviewers[2]). 'What mischief are you doing there? Do you think *you* can catch the fox?' A breathless silence ensues. At length a whimper is heard in the cover—

[1] We know nothing of the derivation of the word 'Snob,' unless it be in contradistinction to *Nob*; it is certainly not a classical one, but either that or *Tiger* is too often applied to a total stranger who ventures to show himself in the 'swell countries,' as they are called.

[2] This essay originally appeared in the *Quarterly Review*.

like the voice of a dog in a dream: it is Flourisher,[1] and the Squire cheers him to the echo. In an instant a hound challenges —and another—and another. 'Tis enough. '*Tallyho*!' cries a countryman in a tree. 'He's gone,' exclaims Lord Alvanley: and, clapping his spurs to his horse, in an instant is in the front rank.

As all good sportsmen would say, 'Ware, hounds!' cries Sir Harry Goodricke. 'Give them time,' exclaims Mr. John Moore. 'That's right,' says Mr. Osbaldeston, 'spoil your own sport as usual.' '*Go along*,' roars out Mr. Holyoake, 'there are three couple of hounds on the scent.' 'That's your sort,' says Billy Coke,[2] coming up at the rate of thirty miles an hour on Advance, with a label pinned on his back, '*he kicks*' —'the rest are all coming, and there's a rare scent to-day, I'm sure.' Bonaparte's Old Guard, in its best days, would not have stopped such men as these, so long as life remained in them.

[1] A noted finder, now in Mr. Osbaldeston's pack.

[2] Nephew to Mr. Coke, of Holkham; his famous horse Advance was dangerous in a crowd, and hence the necessity of a label.

Only those who have witnessed it can know in what an extraordinary manner hounds that are left behind in a cover make their way through a crowd, and get up to the leading ones of the pack, which have been fortunate in getting away with their fox. It is true they possess the speed of a race-horse; still nothing short of their high mettle could induce them to thread their way through a body of horsemen going the best pace, with the prospect of being ridden over and maimed at every stride they take. But, as Beckford observes, 'Tis the dash of the fox-hound which distinguishes him.' A turn, however, in their favour, or a momentary loss of scent in the few hounds that have shot ahead—an occurrence to be looked for on such occasions—joins head and tail together, and the scent being good, every hound settles to his fox; the pace gradually improves; *vires acquirit eundo; a terrible burst is the result!*

At the end of nineteen minutes the hounds come to a fault, and for a moment the fox has a chance—in fact, they have been pressed upon by the horses, and have

rather over-run the scent. 'What a pity!' says one. 'What a shame!' cries another, alluding, perhaps, to a young one, who would and could have gone still faster. 'You may thank yourselves for this,' exclaims Osbaldeston, well up at the time, Ashton[1] looking fresh; but only fourteen men of the two hundred are to be counted; all the rest *coming*. At one blast of the horn the hounds are back to the point at which the scent has failed, Jack Stevens being in his place to turn them. '*Yo doit! Pastime*,' says the Squire, as she feathers her stern down the hedgerow, looking more beautiful than ever. She speaks! 'Worth a thousand, by Jupiter!' cries John White, looking over his left shoulder, as he sends both spurs into Euxton, delighted to see only four more of the field are up. Our Snob, however, is amongst them. He has 'gone a good one,' and his countenance is expressive of delight, as he urges his horse to his speed to get again into a front place.

The pencil of a painter is now wanting;

[1] Mr. Osbaldeston sold Ashton to Lord Plymouth for four hundred guineas, after having ridden him six seasons.

and unless the painter should be a sportsman, even his pencil would be worth little. What a country is before him!—what a panorama does it represent! Not a field of less than forty—some a hundred—acres and no more signs of the plough than in the wilds of Siberia. See the hounds in a body that might be covered by a damask table-cloth—every stern down, and every head up, for there is no need of stooping, the scent lying breast-high. But the crash! —the music!—how to describe these? Reader, there is no crash now, and not much music. It is the tinker that makes great noise over a little work; but at the pace these hounds are going there is no time for babbling. Perchance one hound in five may throw his tongue as he goes, to inform his comrades, as it were, that the villain is on before them, and most musically do the light notes of Vocal and Venus fall on the ear of those who may be within reach to catch them. But who is so fortunate in this second burst, nearly as terrible as the first? Our fancy supplies us again, and we think we could name them all. If we look to the left, nearly abreast

of the pack, we see six men going gallantly, and quite as straight as the hounds themselves are going; and on the right are four more, riding equally well, though the former have rather the best of it, owing to having had the inside of the hounds at the last two turns, which must be placed to the chapter of accidents. A short way in the rear, by no means too much so to enjoy this brilliant run, are the rest of the *élite* of the field, who had come up at the first check; and a few who, thanks to the goodness of their steeds, and their determination to be with the hounds, appear as if dropped from the clouds. Some, however, begin to show symptoms of distress. Two horses are seen loose in the distance—a report is flying about that one of the field is badly hurt, and something is heard of a collar-bone being broken, others say it is a leg; but the pace is *too good* to inquire. A cracking of rails is now heard, and one gentleman's horse is to be seen resting, nearly balanced, across one of them, his rider being on his back in the ditch, which is on the landing side. 'Who is he?' says Lord Brudenel to Jack Stevens. 'Can't

tell, my lord; but I thought it was a queerish place when I came o'er it before him.' It is evidently a case of peril, but the pace is *too good* to afford help.

Up to this time, 'Snob' has gone quite in the first flight; the 'Dons' begin to eye him, and, when an opportunity offers, the question is asked, 'Who is that fellow on the little bay horse?' 'Don't know him,' says Mr. *Little* Gilmour (a fourteen-stone Scotchman, by the bye), ganging gallantly to his hounds. 'He can ride,' exclaims Lord Rancliffe. 'A tip-top provincial, depend upon it,' added Lord Plymouth, going quite at his ease on a thorough-bred nag, three stone above his weight, and in perfect racing trim. Animal nature, however, will cry 'enough,' how good soever she may be, if unreasonable man press her beyond the point. The line of scent lies right athwart a large grass ground (as a field is termed in Leicestershire), somewhat on the ascent; abounding in anthills, or hillocks, peculiar to old grazing land, and thrown up by the plough, some hundred years since, into rather high ridges, with deep, holding furrows between each. The fence at the top

is impracticable—Meltonicè, 'a stopper'; nothing for it but a gate, leading into a broad green lane, high and strong, with deep slippery ground on each side of it. 'Now for the timber-jumper,' cries Osbaldeston, pleased to find himself upon Ashton. 'For Heaven's sake, take care of my hounds, in case they may throw up in the lane.' Snob is here in the best company, and that moment perhaps the happiest of his life; but, not satisfied with his situation, wishing to out-Herod Herod, and to have a fine story to tell when he gets home, he pushes to his speed on ground on which all regular Leicestershire men are careful, and the death-warrant of the little bay horse is signed. It is true he gets first to the gate, and has no idea of opening it; sees it contains five new and strong bars that will neither bend nor break; has a great idea of a fall, but no idea of refusing; presses his hat firmly on his head, and gets his whip hand at liberty to give the good little nag a refresher; but all at once he perceives it will not do. When attempting to collect him for the effort, he finds his mouth dead and his neck stiff; fancies he hears some-

thing like a wheezing in his throat; and discovering quite unexpectedly that the gate would open, wisely avoids a fall, which was *booked* had he attempted to leap it. He pulls up, then, at the gate; and as he places the hook of his whip under the latch, John White goes over it close to the hinge-post, and Captain Ross, upon Clinker, follows him. The Reviewer then walks through.

The scene now shifts. On the other side of the lane is a fence of this description: it is a newly plashed hedge, abounding in strong growers, as they are called, and a yawning ditch on the other side; but, as is peculiar to Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, a considerable portion of the blackthorn, left uncut, leans outwards from the hedge, somewhat about breast-high. This large fence is taken by all now with the hounds—some to the right and some to the left of the direct line; but the little bay horse would have no more of it. Snob puts him twice at it, and manfully too; but the wind is out of him, and he has no power to rise. Several scrambles, but only one fall, occur at this 'rasper,' all having nearly

enough of the killing pace; and a mile and a half farther, the second horses are fallen in with, just in the nick of time. A short check from the stain of sheep makes everything comfortable, and the Squire having hit off his fox like a workman, thirteen men out of two hundred are fresh mounted and with the hounds, which settle to the scent again at a truly killing pace.

'*Hold hard, Holyoake*!' exclaims Mr. Osbaldeston (now mounted on Clasher), knowing what double-quick time he would be marching to, with fresh pipes to play upon and the crowd well shaken off; '*pray* don't press 'em too hard, and we shall be sure to kill our fox.[1] *Have at him there*, Abigail and Fickle, good bitches!—see what a head they are carrying! I'll bet a thousand they kill him.' The country appears better and better. 'He's taking a capital line,' exclaims Sir Harry Goodricke, as he points out to Sir James Musgrave two young Furrier hounds, who are particularly distinguishing themselves at the moment. 'Worth a dozen Reform Bills,'

[1] One peculiar excellence in Mr. Osbaldeston's hounds was their steadiness under pressure by the crowd.

shouts Sir Francis Burdett, sitting erect upon Sampson,[1] and putting his head straight at a yawner. 'We shall have the Whissendine brook,' cries Mr. Maher, who knows every field in the country, 'for he is making straight for Teigh.' 'And a bumper, too, after last night's rain,' holloas Captain Berkeley, determined to get first to four stiff rails in a corner. 'So much the better,' says Lord Alvanley, 'I like a bumper at all times.' 'A fig for the Whissendine,' cries Lord Gardner; 'I am on the best water-jumper in my stable.'

The prophecy turns up. Having skirted Ranksborough gorse the villain has nowhere to stop short of Woodwell-head cover, which he is pointing for; and in ten minutes, or less, the brook appears in view. It is even with its banks, and, as

'Smooth glides the water where the brook is deep,'

its deepness was pretty certain to be fathomed.

'*Yooi*, OVER he goes!' holloas the Squire,

[1] A favourite hunter of the baronet's, which he once honoured by coming all the way from London to Melton to ride *one day* with hounds.

as he perceives Joker and Jewell plunging into the stream, and Red-rose shaking herself on the opposite bank. Seven men out of thirteen take it in their stride; three stop short, their horses refusing the first time, but come well over the second; and three find themselves in the middle of it. The gallant 'Frank Forester' is among the latter: and having been requested that morning to wear a friend's new red coat, to take off the gloss and glare of the shop, he accomplishes the task to perfection in the bluish-black mud of the Whissendine, only then subsiding after a three days' flood.[1] 'Who is that under his horse in the brook?' inquires that good sportsman and fine rider, Mr. Green, of Rolleston, whose noted old mare had just skimmed over the water like a swallow on a summer's evening. 'It's Middleton Biddulph,' says one. 'Pardon me,' cries Mr. Middleton Biddulph; 'Middleton Biddulph is here, *and here he means to be*!' 'Only Dick Christian,'[2] answers

[1] A true story.

[2] A celebrated rough-rider at Melton-Mowbray, who greatly distinguished himself in the late grand steeplechace from Rolleston. He is paid fifteen shillings per day for riding gentlemen's young horses with hounds.

Lord Forester, 'and it's nothing new to him.' 'But he'll be drowned,' exclaims Lord Kinnaird. 'I shouldn't wonder,' observes Mr. William Coke. But the pace is *too good* to inquire.

The fox does his best to escape: he threads hedgerows, tries the out-buildings of a farm-house, and once turns so short as nearly to run his foil; but—the perfection of the thing—the hounds turn shorter than he does, as much as to say—*die you shall.* The pace has been awful for the last twenty minutes. Three horses are blown to a stand-still, and few are going at their ease. 'Out upon this great carcase of mine! no horse that was ever foaled can live under it at this pace, and over this country,' says one of the best welter-weights, as he stands over his four-hundred-guinea chestnut, then rising from the ground after giving him a heavy fall—his tail nearly erect in the air, his nostrils violently distended, and his eye almost fixed.[1] 'Not

[1] The writer here alluded to that celebrated sportsman, as well as horseman, Mr. Thomas Edge, of Nottinghamshire, who some years back refused, from the late Lord Middleton, the enormous sum of two

hurt, I hope,' exclaims Mr. Maxse, to *somebody* whom he gets a glimpse of through the openings of a tall quickset hedge which is between them, coming neck and croup into the adjoining field, from the top bar of a high, hog-backed stile. His eye might have been spared the unpleasing sight, had not his ear been attracted to a sort of *procumbit-humibos* sound of a horse falling to the ground on his back, the bone of his left hip indenting the greensward within two inches of his rider's thigh. It is young Peyton,[1] who, having missed his second horse at the check, had been going nearly half the way in distress; but from nerve and pluck, perhaps peculiar to Englishmen in the hunting-field, but very peculiar to himself, got within three fields of the end of this brilliant run. The fall was all but a certainty; for it was the third stiff timbered-fence that had unfortunately opposed him, after his horse's wind had been pumped

thousand two hundred pounds for two of his horses, and on another occasion fifty pounds for the loan of one of them during the first run of the day from a certain cover, whether short or long.

[1] The only son of Sir Henry Peyton, Bart., one of the best and hardest riders of the present day.

out by the pace; but he was too good to refuse them, and his horse knew better than to do so.

The *Æneid* of Virgil ends with a death, and a chace is not complete without it. The fox dies within half a mile of Woodwellhead cover, evidently his point from the first, the pack pulling him down in the middle of a large grass field, every hound but one at his brush. Jack Stevens with him in his hands would be a subject worthy of Edwin Landseer himself: a blackthorn, which has laid hold of his cheek, has besmeared his upper garments with blood, and one side of his head and cap are cased in mud, by a fall he has had in a lane, his horse having alighted in the ruts from a high flight of rails; but he has ridden the same horse throughout the run, and has handled him so well he could have gone two miles further, if the chace had been continued so long. Osbaldeston's 'whohoop' might have been heard at Cottesmore, had the wind set in that direction, and every man present is ecstatic with delight. 'Quite the cream of the thing, I suppose,' says Lord Gardner, a very

promising young one, at this time fresh in Leicestershire. 'The cream of everything in the shape of fox-hunting,' observes that excellent sportsman Sir James Musgrave, looking at that moment at his watch. 'Just ten miles, as the crow flies, in one hour and two minutes, with but two trifling checks, over the finest country in the world. *What superb hounds are these*!' added the Baronet, as he turned his horse's head to the wind. 'You are right,' says Colonel Lowther, 'they are perfect. I wish my father had seen them do their work to-day.' Some of the field now come up, who could not live in the first flight; but, as there is no jealousy here, they congratulate each other on the fine day's sport, and each man turns his head towards home.

A large party dine this evening at the Old Club, where, of course, this fine run is discussed, and the following accurate description of it is given by one of the oldest members, a true friend to fox-hunting, and to all mankind as well[1]:—'We found him,' said he, 'at Ashby Pasture, and got away with him, up wind, at a slapping pace over

[1] The writer here alluded to Mr. John Moore.

Burrow Hill, leaving Thorpe Trussels to the right, when a trifling check occurred. He then pointed for Ranksborough gorse, which some feared and others hoped he might hang in a little, but he was too good to go near it. Leaving that on his right also, he crossed the brook to Whissendine, going within half a mile of the village, and then he had nothing for it but to fly. That magnificent country in the direction of Teigh was open to him, and he showed that he had the courage to face it. Leaving Teigh on the right, Woodwellhead was his point, and in two more fields he would have reached it. Thus we found him in the Quorn country; ran him over the finest part of Lord Lonsdale's, and killed him on the borders of the Belvoir. Sir Bellingham Graham's hounds once gave us just such another tickler, from the same place, and in the same time, when the field were nearly as much beaten as they were to-day.'

But we have left Snob in the lane, who, after casting a longing eye towards his more fortunate companions, who were still keeping well in with the hounds, throws the rein over the neck of the good little bay

horse, and, walking by his side, that he may recover his wind, inquires his way to Melton. Having no one to converse with, he thus soliloquises as he goes:—'What a dolt have I been, to spend five hundred a year on my stable, in any country than this! But stop a little: how is it that *I*, weighing but eleven stone four pounds with my saddle, and upon my best horse, an acknowledged good one in my own country, could neither go so fast nor so long as that heavy fellow Maxse: that still heavier Lord Alvanley; and that monster Tom Edge, who, they tell me, weighs eighteen stone, at least, in the scales?' At this moment a bridle-gate opens in the lane, and a gentleman in scarlet appears, with his countenance pale and wan, and expressive of severe pain. It is he who had been dug out of the ditch in which Jack Stevens had left him, his horse having fallen upon him, after being suspended on the rail, and broken three of his ribs. Feeling extremely unwell, he is glad to meet with Snob, who is going his road—to Melton—and who offers him all the assistance in his power. Snob also repeats to him his soliloquy, at

least the sum and substance of it, on which the gentleman—recovering a little from his faintness by the help of a glass of brandy and water at the village—thus makes his comment:—'I think, Sir, you are a stranger in this part of the world.' 'Certainly,' replied Snob, 'it is my first appearance in Leicestershire.' 'I observed you in the run,' continued the wounded sportsman; 'and very well you went up to the time I fell, but particularly so to the first check. You then rode to a leader, and made an excellent choice; but after that period, I saw you not only attempting a line of your own, but taking liberties with your horse, and anticipated the fate you have met with. If you remain with us long, you will be sure to find out that riding to hounds in Leicestershire is different from what it is in most other countries in England, and requires a little apprenticeship. There is much choice of ground; and if this choice be not judiciously made, and coupled with a cautious observance of pace, a horse is beaten in a very short time. If you doubt my creed, look to the events of this memorable day.' Snob thanks him for

his hints, and notes them in his book of memory.

The fame of Snob and his little bay horse reaches Melton before he walks in himself. 'That provincial fellow did not go amiss to-day,' says one. 'Who was that rural-looking man on a neatish bay horse—all but his tail—who was so well with us at the first check?' asks another, who himself could not get to the end, although he went 'a good one,' three parts of the way. There is no one present to answer these questions; but the next day, and the next, Snob is in the field again, and again in a good place. Further inquiries are made, and satisfactory information obtained. On the fourth day, a nod from one—a 'how do you?' from another—'a fine morning,' from a third—are tokens good-humouredly bestowed upon him by some of the leading men; and on the fifth day, after a capital half-hour, in which he has again distinguished himself, a noble *bon vivant*[1] thus addresses him—'Perhaps, Sir, you would like to dine with me to-day; I shall be happy to see you at seven.'

[1] The writer here alluded to Lord Alvanley.

'Covers,' he writes next day to some friend in his remote western province, 'were laid for eight, the favourite number of our late king; and, perhaps his majesty never sat down to a better-dressed dinner in his life. To my surprise, the subject of fox-hunting was named but once during the evening, and that was when an order was given that a servant might be sent to inquire after a gentleman who had had a severe fall that morning over some timber; and to ask, by the way, if Dick Christian came alive out of a ditch, in which he had been left, with a clever young thorough-bred one on the top of him.' The writer proceeds to describe an evening in which wit and music were more thought of than wine—and presenting, in all respects, a perfect contrast to the old notions of a fox-hunting society:—but we have already trespassed on delicate ground.

It is this union of the elegant repose of life with the energetic sports of the field that constitutes the charm of Melton-Mowbray; and who can wonder that young gentlemen, united by profession, should be induced to devote a season or two to such

a course of existence? We must not, however, leave the subject without expressing our regret that resorting, *year after year*, to this metropolis of the chace, should seem at all likely to become a *fashion* with persons whose hereditary possessions lie far from its allurements. It is all very well to go through the training of the acknowledged *school* of 'the craft'; but the country gentleman who understands his duties, and in what the real permanent pleasure of life exists, will never settle down into a regular Meltonian. He will feel that his first concern is with his own proper district, and seek the recreations of the chace, if his taste for them outlives the first heyday of youth, among the scenes, however comparatively rude, in which his natural place has been appointed.

THE ROAD

THE ROAD

THE ROAD

'Sunt quos curriculo,' etc.—HORACE.

EVEN at the present wonder-working period, few greater improvements have been made in any of the useful arts, than in those applied to the system of travelling by land. Projectors and projects have multiplied with our years; and the fairy-petted princes of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments were scarcely transported from place to place with more facility or despatch, than Englishmen are at the present moment. From Liverpool to Manchester, thirty-six miles, in an hour and a half!—surely Dædalus is come amongst us again: but we will, for the present, confine our observations to *the road*; to coaches, coach-horses, coachmen, and coach-masters. We are not thinking of the travelling chariot and four—though, to be sure, the report given us of Lord

Londonderry's speaking in the House of Peers one night, and being at his own house in Durham the next (two hundred and fifty miles off), is astonishing, and was a performance that no other country under the sun could accomplish; yet bribes to postillions and extra relays of horses might have been called in aid here. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves, at present, to the usual course of public conveyances—and a sentence in the private letter of a personal friend of our own has suggested the subject to us. 'I was out hunting,' he writes, 'last season, on a *Monday*, near Brighton; and dined with my father in Merrion Square, Dublin, at six o'clock on the following *Wednesday*—distance four hundred miles!' It was done thus: he went from Brighton in an afternoon coach that set him down in London in time for the Holyhead mail; and this mail, with the help of the steamer to cross the Channel, delivered him in Dublin at the time mentioned. But expedition alone is not our boast. Coach travelling is no longer a disgusting and tedious labour, but has long since been converted into comparative ease,

and really approaches to something like luxury; otherwise it could never have had any chance to engage the smallest part of the attention of that genuine 'Epicuri de grege porcus'—the late happily-named Dr. Kitchener.[1]

It is difficult to determine the exact period at which a stage-coach first appeared upon the road; but it seems to be pretty well ascertained, that in 1662, there were but six; and one of the wise men of those days—John Crosswell, of the Charter House—tried his best to write them down. It was supposed he had the countenance of the country gentlemen, who were afraid, if their wives could get easily and cheaply conveyed to London, they might not settle so well afterwards to their domestic duties at the Hall or the Grange. We will, however, only go back ninety-four years. In 1742, the Oxford stage-coach left London at seven o'clock in the morning, and reached Uxbridge at midday. It arrived at High-Wycombe at five in the evening, where it

[1] Dr. Johnson boasted of having travelled from London to Salisbury in one day, by the common stage, 'hung high and rough!'

rested for the night; and proceeded at the same rate for the seat of learning on the morrow. Here, then, were ten hours consumed each day in travelling twenty-seven miles, and nearly two days in performing what is now done with the greatest ease under six hours. To go from London to York—two hundred miles—used to take six days; it now occupies twenty hours![1] From London to Exeter, eighty years ago, the proprietors of coaches promised 'a safe and expeditious journey in a fortnight.' Private carriages now accomplish the journey —one hundred and seventy-five miles—in twenty hours; and the mail (the Devonport) in seventeen, passing through Wincaunton, a new route, within the last month. The Manchester Telegraph, from the Bull and Mouth, performs her journey, with the utmost regularity, in eighteen hours!

May we be permitted, since we have mentioned the Arabian Nights, to make a little demand on our readers' fancy, and suppose it possible that a worthy old gentle-

[1] According to Creech's *Fugitive Pieces*, there was only one coach from Edinburgh to London, which was from twelve to sixteen days on the road.

man of this said year—1742—had fallen comfortably asleep, *à la Dodswell*, and never awoke till Monday last in Piccadilly? 'What coach, your honour?' says a ruffianly-looking fellow, much like what he might have been had he lived a hundred years back. 'I wish to go home to Exeter,' replies the old gentleman, mildly. 'Just in time, your honour, here she comes—them there grey horses; where's your luggage?' 'Don't be in a hurry,' observes the stranger: 'that's a gentleman's carriage!' 'It ain't, I tell you,' says the cad; 'it's the Comet, and you must be as quick as lightning.' *Nolens volens*, the remonstrating old gentleman is shoved into the Comet by a cad at each elbow, having been three times assured that his luggage is in the hind boot, and twice three times denied having ocular demonstration of the fact.

However, he is now seated; and 'What *gentleman* is going to drive us?' is his first question to his fellow passengers. 'He is no gentleman, sir,' says a person who sits opposite to him, and who happens to be a proprietor of the coach. 'He has been on the Comet ever since she started, and

is a very steady young man.' 'Pardon my ignorance,' replies the regenerated; 'from the cleanliness of his person, the neatness of his apparel, and the language he made use of, I mistook him for some enthusiastic bachelor of arts, wishing to become a charioteer after the manner of the illustrious ancients.' 'You must have been long in foreign parts, sir,' observes the proprietor. In five minutes, or less, after this parley commenced the wheels went round, and in another five the coach arrived at Hyde Park gate; but long before it got there, the worthy gentleman of 1742 (set down by his fellow-travellers for either a little cracked, or an emigrant from the backwoods of America) exclaimed, 'What! off the stones already?' 'You have never been on the stones,' observes his neighbour on his right; 'no stones in London now, sir.' 'Bless me!' quoth our friend, 'here's a noble house! to whom does it belong? But why those broken windows, those iron blinds, and strong barricade?'[1] 'It is the

[1] Nearly on the site occupied by Apsley House stood, in 1742, the suburban inn, the Hercules' Pillars, where Squire Western put up on his arrival in town in quest

Duke of Wellington's,' says the coach proprietor, the greatest captain since the days of Scipio. An ungrateful people made an attack upon his life, on the anniversary of the day upon which he won the most important battle ever fought in Europe.' Here a passenger in black threw out something about Alcibiades, which, however, the rattle made it impossible to understand. 'But we are going at a great rate!' exclaims again the stranger. 'Oh no, sir,' says the proprietor, '*we never go fast over this stage*! We have time allowed in consequence of being subject to interruptions, and we make it up over the lower ground.' Five and thirty minutes, however, bring them to the noted town of Brentford. 'Hah!' says the old man, becoming young again; 'what! no improvement in this filthy place? Is old Brentford still here? a national disgrace! Pray, sir, who is your county member now?' 'His name is Hume, sir,' was the reply. 'The modern Hercules,' added the gentleman on the right; 'the real cleanser of the

of his daughter; and from whence, by the bye, he sent back his *chaplain* several stages to fetch his forgotten tobacco-box!

Augean stable.' 'A gentleman of large property in the county, *I presume?*' said the man of the last century. 'Not an acre,' replied the communicative proprietor: 'a Scotchman from the town of Montrose.' 'Ay, ay; nothing like the high road to London for those Scotchmen. A great city merchant, no doubt, worth a plum or two?' 'No such thing, sir,' quoth the other; 'the gentleman was a doctor, and made his fortune in the Indies.' 'No quack, I warrant you.' The proprietor was silent; but the clergyman in the corner again muttered something which was again lost, owing to the coach coming at the instant, at the rate of ten miles in the hour, upon the vile pavement of Brentford.

In five minutes under the hour the Comet arrives at Hounslow, to the great delight of our friend, who by this time waxed hungry, not having broken his fast before starting. 'Just fifty-five minutes and thirty-seven seconds,' says he, 'from the time we left London!—wonderful travelling, gentlemen, to be sure, but much too fast to be safe. However, thank Heaven, we are arrived at a good-looking

house; and now, waiter! I hope you have got breakf——' Before the first syllable, however, of the word could be pronounced, the worthy old gentleman's head struck the back of the coach by a jerk, which he could not account for, (the fact was, three of the four fresh horses were bolters) and the waiter, the inn, and indeed Hounslow itself (*'terræque urbesque recedunt'*), disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. Never did such a succession of doors, windows, and window-shutters, pass so quickly in his review before —and he hoped they might never do so again. Recovering, however, a little from his surprise—'My dear sir,' said he, 'you told me we were to change horses at Hounslow? Surely they are not so inhuman as to drive these poor animals another stage at this unmerciful rate?' 'Change horses, sir!' says the proprietor; 'why, we changed them whilst you were putting on your spectacles, and looking at your watch. Only one minute allowed for it at Hounslow, and it is often done in fifty seconds by those nimble-fingered horse-keepers.' 'You astonish me!—but really I do not like to go so fast.' 'Oh, sir! we

always spring them over these six miles. It is what we call *the hospital ground.*' This alarming phrase is presently interpreted: it intimates that horses whose 'backs are getting down instead of up in their work'—some 'that won't hold an ounce down hill, or draw an ounce up'—others 'that kick over the pole one day, and over the bars the next'—in short, all the reprobates, styled in the road slang *bo-kickers*, are sent to work these six miles, because *here* they have nothing to do but to gallop—not a pebble as big as a nutmeg on the road; and so even, that it would not disturb the equilibrium of a spirit-level.

The coach, however, goes faster and faster over the *hospital ground*, as the *bo-kickers* feel their legs, and the collars get warm to their shoulders; and having ten outsides, the luggage of the said ten, and a few extra packages besides on the roof, she rolls rather more than is pleasant, although the centre of gravity is pretty well kept down by four not slender insides, two well-laden boots, and three huge trunks in the slide. The gentleman of the last century, however, becomes alarmed—is

sure the horses are running away with the coach—declares he perceives by the shadow that there is nobody on the box, and can see the reins dangling about the horses' heels. He attempts to look out of the window, but his fellow-traveller dissuades him from doing so:—'You may get a shot in your eye from the wheel. Keep your head in the coach; it's all right, depend on't. We always spring 'em over this stage.' Persuasion is useless; for the horses increase their speed, and the worthy old gentleman looks out. But what does he see? Death and destruction before his eyes!—No: to his surprise he finds the coachman firm at his post, and in the act of taking a pinch of snuff from the gentleman who sits beside him on the *bench*, his horses going at the rate of a mile in three minutes at the time. 'But suppose anything should break, or a linchpin should give way and let a wheel loose?' is the next appeal to the communicative, but not very consoling proprietor. 'Nothing *can* break, sir,' is the reply; 'all of the very best stuff; axletrees of the best K. Q. iron, faggoted edgeways, well bedded in the

timbers; and as for linchpins, we have not one about the coach. We use the best patent boxes that are manufactured. In short, sir, you are as safe in it as if you were in your bed.' 'Bless me,' exclaims the old man, 'what improvements! And the roads!' 'They are perfection, sir,' says the proprietor: 'no horse walks a yard in this coach between London and Exeter—all trotting-ground now.' 'A little *galloping* ground, I fear,' whispers the senior to himself. 'But who has effected all this improvement in your paving?' 'An American of the name of M'Adam,' was the reply—'but coachmen call him the Colossus of Roads. Great things have likewise been done in cutting through hills and altering the course of roads: and it is no uncommon thing nowadays to see four horses trotting away merrily down hill on that very ground where they formerly were seen walking up hill.'[1]

[1] Most roads through hilly countries were originally struck out by drivers of pack-horses, who, to avoid bogs, chose the upper ground. Consequently, it often happened that point B was lower than point A; yet to go from A to B the traveller ascended a hill to secure sound footing, and then descended to his point.

'And pray, my good sir, what sort of horses may you have over the next stage?' 'Oh, sir, no more *bo-kickers*. It is hilly and severe ground, and requires cattle strong and staid. You'll see four as fine horses put to the coach at Staines as you ever saw in a nobleman's carriage in your life.' 'Then we shall have no more galloping—no more springing them, as you term it?' 'Not quite so fast over the next ground,' replied the proprietor; 'but he will make good play over some part of it: for example, when he gets three parts down a hill he lets them loose, and cheats them out of half the one they have to ascend from the bottom of it. In short, they are half way up it before a horse touches his collar; and we *must* take every advantage with such a fast coach as this, and one that loads so well, or we should never keep our time. We are now to a minute; in fact, the country people no longer look at the *sun* when they want to set their clocks,—they look only to the Comet. But, depend upon it, you are quite safe; we have nothing but first-rate artists on this coach.' 'Artist! artist!' grumbles the old gentleman; 'we had no such term as that.'

'I should like to see this *artist* change horses at the next stage,' resumes our ancient; 'for at the last it had the appearance of magic—"Presto, Jack, and begone!"' 'By all means; you will be much gratified. It is done with a quickness and ease almost incredible to any one who has only read or heard of it; not a buckle nor a rein is touched twice, and still all is made secure; but use becomes second nature with us. Even in *my* younger days it was always half an hour's work—sometimes more. There was—"Now, ladies and gentlemen, what would you like to take? There's plenty of time, while the horses are changing, for tea, coffee, or supper; and the coachman will wait for you—won't you, *Mr. Smith*?" Then Mr. Smith himself was in no hurry; he had a lamb about his coach for one butcher in the town, and perhaps half a calf for another; a barrel of oysters for the lawyer, and a basket of game for the parson, *all on his own account.* In short, the best wheel of the coach was his, and he could not be otherwise than accommodating.'

The coach arrives at Staines, and the ancient gentleman puts his intentions into

effect—though he was near being again too late; for by the time he could extract his hat from the netting that suspended it over his head, the leaders had been taken from their bars, and were walking up the yard towards their stables. On perceiving a fine thorough-bred horse led towards the coach with a twitch fastened tightly to his nose, he exclaims, 'Holloa, Mr. Horse-keeper! You are going to put an unruly horse in the coach.' 'What! this here *oss?*' growls the man; 'the quietest *hanimal* alive, sir!' as he shoves him to the near side of the pole. At this moment, however, the coachman is heard to say in somewhat of an undertone, 'Mind what you are about, Bob; don't let him touch the roller-bolt.' In thirty seconds more they are off—'the staid and steady team,' so styled by the proprietor, in the coach. 'Let 'em go, and take care of yourselves,' says the artist, so soon as he is firmly seated upon his box; and this is the way in which they start. The near leader rears right on end, and if the rein had not been yielded to him at the instant, he would have fallen backwards on the head of the pole. The moment the

twitch was taken from the nose of the thorough-bred near-wheeler, he drew himself back to the extent of his poll-chain—his fore-legs stretched out before him—and then, like a lion loosened from his toil, made a snatch at the coach that would have broken two pairs of traces of 1742. A steady and good-whipped horse, however, his partner, started the coach himself, with a gentle touch of the thong, and away they went off together. But the thorough-bred one was very far from being comfortable; it was in vain that the coachman tried to soothe him with his voice, or stroked him with the crop of his whip. He drew three parts of the coach, and cantered for the first mile; and when he did settle down to his trot, his snorting could be heard by the passengers, being as much as to say, 'I was not born to be a slave.' In fact, as the proprietor now observed, 'he had been a fair plate horse in his time, but his temper was always queer.'

After the first shock was over, the Conservative of the eighteenth century felt comfortable. The pace was considerably slower than it had been over the last stage, but he

was unconscious of the reason for its being diminished. It was to accommodate the queer temper of the race-horse, who, if he had not been humoured at starting, would never have settled down to his trot, but have ruffled all the rest of the team. He was also surprised, if not pleased, at the quick rate at which they were ascending hills which, in his time, he should have been asked by the coachman to have walked up: but his pleasure was short-lived; the third hill they descended produced a return of his agony. This is what is termed on the road *a long fall of ground*, and the coach rather pressed upon the horses. The temper of the race-horse became exhausted; breaking into a canter, he was of little use as a wheeler, and there was then nothing for it but a gallop. The leaders only wanted the signal; and the point of the thong being thrown lightly over their backs, they were off like an arrow out of a bow: but the rocking of the coach was awful, and more particularly so to the passengers on the roof. Nevertheless, she was not in danger: the master-hand of the artist kept her in a direct line, and meeting the oppos-

ing ground, she steadied, and all was right. The newly awakened gentleman, however, begins to grumble again. 'Pray, my good sir,' says he, anxiously, 'do use your authority over your coachman, and *insist* upon his putting the drag-chain on the wheel when descending the next hill.' 'I have no such authority,' replies the proprietor: 'it is true we are now drawn by my horses, but I cannot interfere with the driving of them.' 'But is he not your servant?' 'He is, sir; but I contract to work the coach so many miles in so many hours, and he engages to drive it, and each is subject to a fine if the time be not kept on the road. On so fast a coach as this, every advantage must be taken; and if we were to drag down such hills as these, we should never reach Exeter to-day.'

Our friend, however, will have no more of it. He quits the coach at Bagshot, congratulating himself on the safety of his limbs. Yet he takes one more peep at the change, which is done with the same despatch as before: three greys and a pie-ball replacing three chestnuts and a bay—the harness beautifully clean, and the ornaments

bright as the sun. Not a word is spoken by the passengers, who merely look their admiration; but the laconic address of the coachman is not lost on the by-standers. 'Put the bay mare *near wheel* this evening, and the stallion *up to the cheek*,' said he to his horse-keeper, as he placed his right foot on the roller-bolt—*i.e.* the last step but one to the box. '*How is Paddy's leg?*' 'It 's all right, sir,' replied the horse-keeper. 'Let 'em go, then,' quoth the artist, 'and take care of yourselves.'

The worthy old gentleman is now shown into a room, and, after warming his hands at the fire, rings the bell for the waiter. A well-dressed person appears, whom he of course takes for the landlord. 'Pray, sir,' says he, 'have you any *slow* coach down this road to-day?' 'Why, yes, sir,' replies John; 'we shall have the Regulator down in an hour.' 'Just right,' said our friend; 'it will enable me to break my fast, which I have not done to-day.' 'Oh, sir,' observes John, 'these here fast drags be the ruin of us. 'Tis all hurry scurry, and no gentleman has time to have nothing on the road. What will you take, sir?

Mutton-chops, veal-cutlets, beefsteaks, or a fowl (to kill)?'

At the appointed time, the Regulator appears at the door. It is a strong, well-built drag, painted what is called chocolate colour, bedaubed all over with gilt letters—a bull's head on the doors, a Saracen's head on the hind boot, and drawn by four strapping horses; but it wants the neatness of the other. The passengers may be, by a shade or two, of a lower order than those who had gone forward by the Comet; nor, perhaps, is the coachman quite so refined as the one we have just taken leave of. He has not the neat white hat, the clean doe-skin gloves, the well-cut trousers, and dapper frock; but still his appearance is respectable, and perhaps, in the eyes of many, more in character with his calling. Neither has he the agility of the artist on the Comet, for he is nearly double his size; but he is a strong, powerful man, and might be called a pattern-card of the heavy coachmen of the present day—in other words, of a man who drives a coach which carries sixteen passengers instead of fourteen, and is rated at eight miles in the

hour instead of ten. 'What room in the Regulator?' says our friend to the waiter, as he comes to announce its arrival. 'Full, inside, sir, and in front; but you'll have *the gammon-board* all to yourself, and your luggage is in the hind boot.' 'Gammon-board! Pray what's that? Do you not mean *the basket*?' 'Oh no, sir,' says John, smiling—'no such a thing on the road now. It is the hind-dickey, as some call it, where you'll be as comfortable as possible, and can sit with your back or your face to the coach, or *both*, if you like.' 'Ah, ah,' continues the old gentleman; 'something new again, I presume.' However, the mystery is cleared up; the ladder is reared to the hind wheel, and the gentleman seated on the gammon-board.

Before ascending to his place, our friend has cast his eye on the team that is about to convey him to Hartford Bridge, the next stage on the great western road, and he perceives it to be of a different stamp from that which he had seen taken from the coach at Bagshot. It consisted of four moderate-sized horses, full of power, and still fuller of condition, but with a fair

sprinkling of blood; in short, the eye of a judge would have discovered something about them not very unlike galloping. 'All right!' cried the guard, taking his key-bugle in his hand; and they proceeded up the village, at a steady pace, to the tune of 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and continued at that pace for the first five miles. '*I am landed*,' thinks our friend to himself. Unluckily, however, for the humane and cautious old gentleman, even the Regulator was about to show tricks. Although what is now called a slow coach, she is timed at eight miles in the hour through a great extent of country, and must of course make play where she can, being strongly opposed by hills lower down the country, trifling as these hills are, no doubt, to what they once were. The Regulator, moreover, loads well, not only with passengers, but with luggage; and the last five miles of this stage, called the Hartford Bridge Flat, have the reputation of being the best five miles for a coach to be found at this time in England. The ground is firm, the surface undulating, and therefore favourable to draught; always

dry, not a shrub being near it; nor is there a stone upon it much larger than a marble. These advantages, then, are not lost to the Regulator, or made use of without sore discomposure to the solitary tenant of her gammon-board.

Any one that has looked into books will very readily account for the lateral motion, or rocking, as it is termed, of a coach, being greatest at the greatest distance from the horses (as the tail of a paper kite is in motion whilst the body remains at rest); and more especially when laden as this coach was—the greater part of the weight being forward. The situation of our friend, then, was once more deplorable. The Regulator takes but twenty-three minutes for these celebrated five miles, which cannot be done without 'springing the cattle'[1] now and then; and it was in one of the very best of their gallops of that day, that they were met by the coachman of the Comet, who was returning with his *up* coach. When coming out of rival yards, coachmen never fail to cast an eye to the

[1] The term on the road is 'springing them'—the word *cattle* understood.

loading of their opponents on the road, and *now* that of the *natty* artist of the Comet experienced a high treat. He had a full view of his quondam passenger, and thus described his situation. He was seated with his back to the horses—his arms extended to each extremity of the guard-irons—his teeth set grim as death—his eyes cast down towards the ground, thinking the less he saw of his danger the better. There was what is called *a top-heavy load*—perhaps a ton of luggage on the roof, and, it may be, not *quite* in obedience to the act of parliament standard. There were also two horses at wheel whose strides were of rather unequal length, and this operated powerfully on the coach. In short, the lurches of the Regulator were awful at the moment of the Comet meeting her. A tyro in mechanics would have exclaimed, 'The centre of gravity must be lost; the centrifugal force will have the better of it—*over she must go*!'

The centre of gravity having been preserved, the coach arrived safe at Hartford Bridge; but the old gentleman has again had enough of it. 'I will walk into Devon-

shire,' said he, as he descended from his perilous exaltation. 'What did that rascally waiter mean by telling me this was a slow coach? and, moreover, look at the luggage on the roof!' 'Only regulation height, sir,' says the coachman; 'we aren't allowed to have it an inch higher; sorry we can't please you, sir, but we will try and make room for you in front.' '*Fronti nulla fides*,' mutters the worthy to himself, as he walks tremblingly into the house—adding, 'I shall not give this fellow a shilling; *he is dangerous*.'

The Regulator being off, the waiter is again applied to. 'What do you charge per mile posting?' 'One and sixpence, sir.' 'Bless me! just double! Let me see—two hundred miles, at two shillings per mile, postboys, turnpikes, etc., twenty pounds. This will never do.. Have you no coach that does not carry luggage on the top?' 'Oh yes, sir,' replies the waiter, 'we shall have one to-night that is not allowed to carry a band-box on the roof.' 'That's the coach for me; pray what do you call it?' 'The Quicksilver mail, sir: one of the best out of London—Jack White

and Tom Brown, picked coachmen,[1] over this ground—Jack White down to-night.' 'Guarded and lighted?' 'Both, sir; blunderbuss and pistols in the sword-case; a lamp each side the coach, and one under the footboard—see to pick up a pin the darkest night of the year.' 'Very fast?' 'Oh no, sir; *just keeps time and that's all.*' 'That's the coach for me, then,' repeats our hero; 'and I am sure I shall feel at my ease in it. I suppose it is what used to be called the Old Mercury?'

Unfortunately, the Devonport (commonly called the Quicksilver) mail is half a mile in the hour faster than most in England, and is, indeed, one of the miracles of the road. Let us, then, picture to ourselves our anti-reformer snugly seated in this mail, on a pitch-dark night in November. It is true she has no luggage on the roof, nor much to incommode her elsewhere: but she is a mile in the hour faster than the Comet, at least three miles quicker than the Regulator; and she performs more than half her journey by lamplight. It is need-

[1] These men were both on the Quicksilver mail, and both first-rate coachmen.

less to say, then, our senior soon finds out his mistake; but there is no remedy at hand, for it is the dead of the night, and all the inns are shut up. He must proceed, or be left behind in a stable. The climax of his misfortunes then approaches. Nature being exhausted, sleep comes to his aid, and he awakes on a stage which is called the fastest on the journey—it is four miles of ground, and twelve minutes is the time! The old gentleman starts from his seat, having dreamed the horses were running away with the coach, and so, no doubt, they might be. He is, however, determined to convince himself of the fact, though the passengers assure him 'all's right.' 'Don't put your head out of the window,' says one of them, 'you will lose your hat to a certainty': but advice is seldom listened to by a terrified man, and next moment a stentorian voice is heard crying, 'Stop, coachman, stop—I have lost my hat and wig!' The coachman hears him not—and in another second the broad wheels of a road waggon have for ever demolished the lost head-gear. But here we must leave our adventurous Gilpin of 1742. We have

taken a great liberty with him, it is true, but we are not without our precedent. One of the best chapters in Livy contains the history of 'an event which never took place.' In the full charm of his imagination, the historian brings Alexander into Italy, where he never was in his life, and displays him in his brightest colours. We father our sins, then, upon the Patavinian.

But we will now adhere to sober prose, and the changes of our own time. Thirty years ago, the Holyhead mail left London, *viâ* Oxford, at eight o'clock at night, and arrived in Shrewsbury between ten and eleven the following night, being twenty-seven hours to one hundred and sixty-two miles. The distance is now *done*, without the least difficulty, in sixteen hours and a quarter; and the Holyhead mail is actually at Bangor Ferry, eighty-three miles further, in the same time it used to take in reaching the post-office at Shrewsbury. We fancy we now see it, as it was when we travelled on it in our schoolboy time, over the Wolverhampton and Shiffnal stage—in those days loose uncovered sand in part—with Charles Peters or Old Ebden quitting his

seat as guard, and coming to the assistance of the coachman, who had flogged his horses till he could flog them no longer. We think we see them crawling up the hill in Shrewsbury town—whip, whip, whip; and an hour behind their time 'by Shrewsbury clock'; the betting not ten to one that she had not been overturned on the road! It is now a treat to see her approach the town, if not before, never after, her *minute*; and she forms a splendid day-coach through Wales and England, on her up-journey in the summer; namely from Holyhead to Daventry. A young man of the name of Taylor, a spirited proprietor, *horses* her through Shrewsbury, from Hay-Gate to Nescliff, in a manner that deserves to be spoken of. The stages are ten and eight, and for these he has a team of bays, a team of greys, and two teams of chestnuts, that can show with England.[1] Let us look to another coach out of this town at the period we have been speaking of—'the Shrewsbury and Chester Highflyer!' This coach started

[1] It is a well-known fact, that this mail has not varied five minutes in or out of Shrewsbury during the last eighteen months.

from Shrewsbury at eight o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Chester about the same time in the evening—distance, *forty miles*. This was always a good hard road for wheels, and rather favourable for draught; and how then could all these hours be accounted for? Why, if a 'commercial gentleman' had a little business at Ellesmere, there was plenty of time for that. If a '*real gentleman*' wanted to pay a morning visit on the road, there could be no objection to that. In the pork-pie season, half an hour was generally consumed in consuming one of them; for Mr. Williams, the coachman, was a wonderful favourite with the farmers' wives and daughters all along the road. The coach dined at Wrexham; for coaches lived well in those days,—they now live upon air: and Wrexham church was to be seen—a fine specimen of the florid Gothic, and one of the wonders of Wales! Then Wrexham was also famous for ale—no public breweries in those days in Wales—and, above all, the inn belonged to Sir Watkin![1] About two hours were allowed for dinner; but 'Billy Williams'—

[1] Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bart.

one of the best-tempered fellows on earth, as honest as Aristides, and, until lately, upon the same ground—was never particular to half an hour or so: 'The coach is ready, gentlemen,' he would say, 'but don't let me disturb you, if you wish for another bottle.' A coach now runs over this ground *a trifle under four hours*!

The Brighton road may be said to be covered with coaches, no less than twenty-five running upon it in the summer. The fastest is the Vivid, from the Spread Eagle, Gracechurch Street, which performs the journey in five hours and a quarter. That called the Age, when driven and horsed by the late Mr. Stevenson, was an object of such admiration at Brighton that a crowd was every day collected to see it start. Mr. Stevenson was a graduate of Cambridge; but his passion for the *bench* got the better of all other ambitions, and he became a coachman by profession;—and it is only justice to his memory to admit that, though cut off in the flower of his youth, he had arrived at perfection in his art. His education and early habits had not, however, been lost upon him: his demeanour was always

that of a gentleman; and it may be fairly said of him, that he introduced the phenomenon of refinement into a stage-coach. At a certain change of horses on the road, a silver sandwich-box was handed to his passengers by his *servant*, accompanied by the offer of a glass of sherry to such as were so inclined. Well-born coachmen prevail on this road. A gentleman connected with the first families in Wales, and whose father long represented his native county in Parliament, horsed and drove one side of the ground with Mr. Stevenson; and Mr. Charles Jones, brother to Sir Thomas Tyrwhit Jones, had a coach on it called the Pearl, which he both horsed and drove himself. The Bognor coach, horsed by the Messrs. Walkers of Mitchel Grove, and driven in the first style by Mr. John Walker, must also be fresh in the recollection of many of our readers; and Sir Vincent Cotton, one of our oldest baronets, now drives the Age, having purchased it of Mr. Willan who drove it, and who now drives the Magnet on the same road.

But to return to fast work: the Edinburgh mail runs the distance, four hundred miles,

in a little over forty hours, and we may set our watches by it at any point of her journey. Stoppages included, this approaches eleven miles in the hour, and much the greater part of it by lamplight. The Exeter day-coach, the Herald, from the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, runs over her ground, a hundred and seventy-three miles, in twenty hours—admirable performance, considering the natural unevenness of the country through which she has to pass. The Devonport mail does her work in first-rate style, two hundred and twenty-seven miles, in twenty-two hours. In short, from London to Cheltenham, Gloucester, Worcester, Birmingham, Norwich, or any other place, whose distance does not much exceed one hundred miles, is now little more than a pleasant morning drive. We say *pleasant*; for this extraordinary speed is *not* attained, generally speaking, by putting animals to anything like cruel exertion.

A fast coach has, or ought to have, very nearly a horse to every mile of ground it runs—reckoning one way, or 'one side of the ground.'[1] Proprietors of coaches have

[1] For example, from London to Shrewsbury is a hundred and fifty-eight miles, and the number of horses

at length found out—though they were a long time before they did discover it—that the hay and corn-market is not so expensive as the horse-market. They have, therefore, one horse in four always at rest; or, in other words, each horse lies still on the fourth day, thus having the advantage of man. For example, if ever we turn coach proprietors, or 'get into harness,' as the proper

kept for the Wonder coach is a hundred and fifty. Perhaps, for the length of ground it travels over, this is the most punctual coach at all its stages on the journey at this time in England. It leaves Shrewsbury at a quarter before six A.M., and arrives at the Bull and Mouth, London, at a quarter past nine P.M.; and as this was the *first* coach that attempted to become a *day-coach* over so great an extent of ground, we are induced to notice one particular team on it, said to be the most superb of their kind, and for the purpose for which they are used, at this time in Great Britain. They are chestnuts, the property of Mr. Evans, of Wolverhampton; and their ground is from that town to Wednesbury, distance six miles. The coachmen of the Wonder also deserve notice for their uniformly good conduct and skill. Their names are Wood (who drives out of London), Lyley, Wilcox, and Hayward.

There is likewise a very fast and well-conducted coach which passes through Shrewsbury, viz., the Hirondelle, from Cheltenham to Liverpool, a hundred and thirty-three miles, in twelve hours and a half! Both these coaches load uncommonly well.

term is—which, as we have become fox-hunters, is by no means impossible—we shall keep ten horses for every ten miles' stage we engage to cover. In this case, eight horses only will be at work, four up and four down. If the stage be less than eight miles, nine horses may do the work; but no horse in a fast coach can continue to run every day, the excitement of high keep and profuse sweating producing disease. In practice, perhaps, no animal toiling for man, solely *for his profit*, leads so easy and so comfortable a life as the English coach-horse. He is sumptuously fed, kindly treated; and, if he do suffer a little in his work, he has twenty-three hours in the twenty-four of luxurious ease. He is now almost a stranger to the lash, nor do we ever see him with a broken skin; but we often see him kick up his heels when taken from his coach, after having performed his stage of ten miles in five minutes under the hour. So much for *condition*.

No horse lives so high as a coach-horse. In the language of the stable, his stomach is the measure of his corn; he is fed *ad libitum*. The effect of this is visible in two ways: first, it is surprising to see how soon horses

gather flesh in this severe work; for there is none, as far as muscular exertion goes, more severe whilst it lasts; and, secondly, proprietors find that good flesh is no obstacle to their speed, but, on the contrary, operates to their advantage. Horses draw by their weight, and not by the force of their muscles, which merely assist the application of that weight; the heavier a horse is, then, the more powerful is he in his harness; in short, it is the weight of the animal which produces the draught, and the play and force of his muscles serve to continue it. Light horses, therefore, how good soever their action, ought not to be put to draw a heavy load, as muscular force cannot act against it for any great length of time.

The average price of horses for fast coaches may be about twenty-five pounds. Fancy teams, and those working out of London, may be rated higher, say thirty pounds; but taking a hundred miles of ground, *well horsed*, the former is about the mark.[1] The average period of each

[1] Of course we speak of prime cost; for coach-horses increase in value as they acquire condition, and are found to be equal to their work.

horse's service does not exceed four years in a fast coach; perhaps scarcely so much, although still equal to more moderate work. In a slow one we may allow seven; but in both cases we are alluding to horses put to work at five or six years old.[1] Considerable judgment is necessary to the selection of horses for fast work in harness; for if they have not action which will command the pace they are timed at, they soon destroy themselves. For a wheel-horse, he should have sound fore-legs, or he cannot be depended upon down hill. Good hind-legs and well-spread gaskins are also essential points in a coach-horse; the weight or force applied proceeding from the fulcrum formed by the hinder feet. The price we have named as the average one for such animals may appear a very low one; but we must remember that to be a hunter or a good roadster, a horse must have length of shoulder, length of frame, peculiarly placed hinder-legs, and a well-bitted mouth: whereas, without any of

[1] There are at this time two leaders on the Dover road, which have run together over the same stage upwards of twelve years!

these qualities he may make an excellent coach-horse; and hence the value of the coach-market to our breeders. Blemished horses also find their way into coaches, as do those whose tempers are bad; neither is a blind horse, with good courage, altogether objectionable, now the roads are so level.[1]

The following description of a road coach-horse, for fast work, was given by the author of these papers at the request of an eminent London coach-proprietor: 'First requisite, action. Second, sound legs and feet, with power and breeding equal to the nature and length of the ground he will work upon. Third, good wind, as the power of respiration is called, without which the first and second qualifications will not avail, in very fast work, for any length of time. A clear-winded coach-horse will always keep his condition, consequently his health; because he does

[1] Thirty years back blind horses were numerous in stage-coaches; in fact, it would now and then happen that the whole team were in darkness. 'Well over *that*, sir,' said one of the old school of coachmen to a passenger that sate beside him on the box, having just passed a dangerous bridge on a foggy night, '*only one eye among us*!' That 'one' was his own!

not feel distress on a reasonable length of ground. The hunter and the racer are good or bad, chiefly in proportion to their powers of respiration; and such is the case with the road coach-horse. The most proper food, then, for a coach-horse in fast work is that which affords him sufficient nourishment, without having an injurious effect on his wind; in other words, that which does not impair his respiratory organs by pressing on them.'

It may probably surprise many of our readers to be informed of the extent to which individual persons in England embark their capital in what is termed the coaching-line. Mr. Chaplin, who is the occupier of the five following 'yards,' as they are termed, in London—namely, those of the Spread Eagle and Cross Keys, Gracechurch Street; the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane; the White Horse, Fetter Lane; and the Angel, behind St. Clement's—has no less than thirteen hundred horses at work, in various coaches, on various roads; and Messrs. Horne and Sherman, the two next largest coach-proprietors in London, have about seven hundred each. Those who have not

witnessed it, might, perhaps, be still more astonished at the regularity and ease with which these prodigious, apparently overwhelming, establishments are conducted, by the means of foremen and subordinates well trained to their business.[1]

It may not be uninteresting to the uninitiated to learn how a coach is *worked*. We will, then, assume that A, B, C, and D enter into a contract to *horse* a coach eighty miles, each proprietor having twenty miles; in which case, he is said to *cover both sides of the ground*, or *to and fro*. At the expiration of twenty-eight days, the lunar month, a settlement takes place; and if the gross earnings of the coach should be five pounds per mile, there will be four hundred pounds to divide between the four proprietors, *after* the following charges have been deducted; viz., tolls, duty to government, mileage (or hire of the coach, to the coachmaker), two coachmen's wages, porters' wages, rent or charge of booking-offices at each end, and washing the coaches. These charges

[1] Mr. Chaplin is likewise proprietor of two London hotels, residing in that called 'Osborne's,' in the Adelphi.

may amount to one hundred pounds, which leaves three hundred pounds to keep eighty horses and to pay the horse-keepers, for a period of twenty-eight days, which gives, within a fraction, a pound a-week for each horse. Thus it appears that a fast coach, properly appointed, cannot pay unless its gross receipts amount to five pounds per double mile; and that, even then, the *horser's* profits depend on the luck he has with his stock.

In the present age, the art of mechanism is eminently reduced to the practical purposes of life, and the modern form of the stage-coach seems to have arrived at perfection. It combines prodigious strength with almost incredible lightness, not weighing more than about eighteen hundredweight; and, being kept so much nearer the ground than formerly, is of course considerably safer. Accidents, no doubt, occur, and a great many more than meet the public eye; but how should this be otherwise, when we take into account the immense number of coaches on the several different roads, a great portion of which travel through the night, and have all the

varieties of our climate to contend with? No one will assert that the proprietors guard against accidents to the utmost of their power; but the great competition they have to encounter is a strong stimulant to their exertions on this score. Indeed, in some respects, the increase of pace has become the traveller's security.[1] Coaches and harness must be of the best quality, horses must be fresh and sound, and coachmen of science and respectability can alone be employed. In fact, to the increased pace of their coaches is the improvement in these men's moral character to be attributed. They have not time now for drinking: and they come in collision with a class of persons superior to those who formerly were stage-coach passengers, by whose example it has been impossible for them not to profit in all respects. A coachman drunk on his box is now a rarity. A coachman *quite sober*, was, even within our memory, still more so. But let us press

[1] To give one instance—the Worcester mail was one of the slowest on the road, and the oftenest overturned. She is now fast, and reckoned one of the safest in England.

this question a little farther: do the proprietors guard against accidents *to the very extent of their ability*? We fear not: too many of them, to touch only one point, allow their coachman to omit the use of the hand or end-buckle to their reins, which to our own knowledge, has lately been productive of several accidents. This is *new*, and it is a mere piece of affectation, and should be put a stop to; for surely if a coachman fancies he has not time to '*pin his ribbons*' before mounting the box, he can do so after having proceeded a short distance on his stage; and he cannot say he has not time to unbuckle them before he comes to the end of it. It is evident, that with reins unbuckled at the ends, should either of them drop out of his hand, all command over his team is gone. Moreover, in the hands of the best coachman, a wheel-horse will now and then drop, and should he not fortunately in this case *be dragged on the ground so as to stop the coach*, up he jumps, and, expecting the whip, rushes forward with his head loose, his rein having been drawn through the coachman's hand. Had it been buckled at the

end, such an occurrence could not have happened; and if, after our warning, damages are sought for on this score, coach proprietors may depend on it they must be prepared to smart. It is also now become fashionable to have no bearing reins to the harness, which, with horses having good mouths, may be, perhaps, dispensed with; but the absence of the pad and crupper cannot be unattended with danger.[1]

That, in fact, nineteen accidents in twenty are the effects of want of proper precaution, cannot be denied. Coachmen, it is true, are not theoretical philosophers; but experience teaches them, that if they drive fast round corners, the centre of

[1] A false notion has lately got abroad, that horses are less apt to fall down with their heads quite at liberty, as those on the Continent are generally driven. Physically speaking, this must be false; forasmuch as the weight being in this case thrown more forward, the centre of gravity is more difficult to be recovered when disturbed. A short time since, the author saw ten horses out of eleven, in two Boulogne and Paris diligences, with broken knees, and called a respectable inhabitant of the first-named town to witness the fact. French diligence-horses, however, fall from want of wind, as well as from want of assistance to keep them on their legs.

gravity must be more or less disturbed by thus diverging from the right line; and if lost, *over she goes:* yet a great number of the overturns that occur happen exactly in this way. Why, then, are not coachmen strictly enjoined by their employers to avoid so gross an error? But it is in the act of descending hills that the majority of catastrophes take place; and the coachman needs not book-learning to enlighten him as to the *wherefore.* Let him only throw up a stone, and watch its descent. If it falls sixteen feet in the first second, it will fall three times that distance in the next, and so on. Thus it is with his coach; the continued impulse it acquires in descending a hill presses upon the wheel-horses, until at last it exceeds their powers of resistance. In short, they have a new force to contend with at every step they take. But this is not all. Instead of checking the *active* force of his coach before she begins to move downward, he too often adds that to the fresh impulse she acquires on her descent. Every coachman, who has a regard to the safety of his own neck, should check the velocity of his coach at the top

of every hill; which, in the language of the road, is termed 'taking a hill in time.' He may, in that case, if his harness be sound, drive his coach down most hills now found on our roads, with ease; and, when a certain way down them, may increase his pace, with perfect safety, to meet the opposing ground at the bottom. With heavily laden coaches we prefer this to the drag-chain on one wheel only, by which hundreds of them have been pulled over on slippery roads; and which is a great check to speed, too, as the *momentum* cannot be taken advantage of, in continuing the motion of the coach when she brings the horses to their collars again.

All persons who have travelled on the Continent have observed an appendage to the public carriages by which both hinder-wheels can be 'dragged,' as the term is, or their rapid rotation checked, by the *conducteur*, or guard, without his descending from his seat, and which is vulgarly called '*le mechanique*.' It is much to be regretted that a similar instrument is not in general use with our stage and mail-coaches, as it would be the means of preventing numerous

accidents that occur by coaches overpowering horses when descending *long* hills, but such as are not considered sufficiently steep to require the drag-chain; or, in case of horses attempting to get the better of their driver. A gentleman of the name of Tongue, residing in Staffordshire, has obtained a patent for a machine, to answer this end, known as 'Tongue's patent drag,' and it is now used on several coaches out of London, as well as on various cross-roads. It is more simple in its construction than that we see on the Continent, and its additional weight—not exceeding twenty pounds—is not worthy of regard when balanced against its security to passengers, and the benefit wheel-horses derive from being eased of the pressure of the load, which is considerable, even on a moderate descent.

The question often arises—is there danger in galloping horses in a coach on perfectly level ground? Under certain circumstances there is. For instance, if there happen to be two horses at wheel which take unequal strides in their gallop, their action will be felt by the coach—they being so near to her, and lateral motion

will be produced, by which her equilibrium may be destroyed. When a coach once begins to swing, a little thing will upset her —even passing over a small stone—as the faster she goes on level ground, the more weight is thrown upon her fore-wheels, and, of course, increased on a descent. Neither is a good road a security to her; on the contrary, the harder the surface of it the more danger, there being nothing to hold the wheels to the ground. If, however, it were possible to make the stride and draught of four horses quite equal, their increased speed would have but little effect on a coach upon tolerably level ground; which is proved by her being *quite steady* in ascending a hill at ever so quick a rate, when every horse is at work. This shows the necessity of *putting horses well together*, and driving them with a steady hand.

The worst of accidents—and one which, with the present structure of coaches, can never be entirely provided against—arises from broken axletrees, from which cause, since these articles first appeared, several lives have been lost, and more limbs frac-

tured. There is certainly something startling in the reflection, that whenever we travel by a coach we are liable to this occurrence, which must happen if the weight above be too great for the sustaining power below; and for this reason the mails are safer than stage-coaches, as not loading so heavily. Everything that can be done to prevent the *snapping* of the axletree has now been adopted, we think, by our coach-builders. In case it does break, what is called the *idle* wheel, in addition to the active wheel, is the only security against an upset; but as this somewhat adds to the weight of a coach, the adoption of it has been abandoned. Accidents, then, are always to be apprehended by travellers from this cause; the loss of wheels is another; and until an act of parliament enforces the use of the patent box, or the screw-nut, so as to trust no longer to the common linch-pin, it will remain a third.[1]

[1] The only linchpin that can be relied on is the wooden one, which together with the screw-nut, is used in the French diligences. It is made of heart of oak; and being once driven through the eye of the arm, cannot be drawn out again, without cutting off the bottom of it, as it swells to a size which prevents

On the whole, however, travelling by public conveyances was never so secure as it is at the present time. Nothing can be more favourable to it than the build of the modern coaches. The boots, being let down between the springs, keep the load, consequently the centre of gravity, low: the wheels of many of them are secured by patent boxes; and in every part of them the best materials are used. The cost of coaches of this description is from a hundred and thirty pounds to a hundred and fifty pounds; but they are generally hired from the maker, at from twopence halfpenny to threepence per mile.

The common height of the stage-coach wheels of the present day is as follows:—the fore-wheels, three feet four inches, the hinder, four feet eight inches. As the former turn round so much oftener than the latter, and also bear more weight, they require to have their fellies fresh wrung

its returning the way it went in. *There is no dependence on iron linchpins.*

The model of a carriage has lately been exhibited built on a plan by which the centre of gravity is preserved under any ordinary circumstances to which our coaches are exposed on the road.

about every five weeks; whereas the latter will stand good for two months or more. The strength of a wheel depends greatly on the attention paid to the arrangement and framing of the spokes. In common wheels, they are framed regularly and equally all round the thickest part of the nave, the tenons of the spokes being so bevelled as to stand about three inches out of perpendicular, by which is produced the *dishing* wheel. This dishing, or concave, wheel is not essential on our present rutless roads, and perpendicular wheels are preferable on level ground. The best wheels we know of are those under our mail-coaches. The spokes are framed somewhat differently into the nave, which is made rather larger than is usual for common coach-wheels, and every other spoke is framed perpendicular to the nave. Hence, the mortises to receive them in it are not made in a parallel line round it, but stand as it were in two different parallels—one without the other; by which means greater solidity is given to the nave, and an immense addition of strength to the wheel. What is called the patent hoop, always

used in stage-coaches—having the iron tire drawn into one complete ring—is not put on these wheels; but the common strokes, as they are called, forged and hammered to the sweep of the rings, and in lengths equal to those of the fellies, are put on red hot, and well secured by riveted nails. The mail fore-wheel is somewhat higher than that of the stage-coach, which is an advantage. Low fore-wheels place the axle so much below the level of the wheel-horses' breasts, that they have not only the carriage to draw, but also part of its weight to bear. This weight distresses their hams, stifles, and hocks, and accounts for coach-horses being so soon unfit for the saddle. It is evident that attention to these points is necessary in putting horses to a coach; and when the fore-wheels are low, the wheel-horses should have as much length of trace as can be given them, for the line of traction should be as nearly even with the draught of the horse as we can make it.[1]

[1] Thus it is with a farmer's waggon. When the shaft-horse is standing at rest—allowing two degrees of an angle for that position—the point of the shaft is nearly

It requires, also, some art to load a coach properly. A waggoner on country roads always puts the greater weight over his hinder wheels, being the highest; and he is right, for he has obstacles to meet, and the power necessary to overcome them diminishes with the increased diameter of the wheel. On our turnpike roads, however, where there is now no obstacle, the load on a coach should be condensed as much as possible, and the heaviest packages placed in the fore-boot. Indeed, all the heavier packages should be put into the boots, and the lighter ones only on the roof. A well-loaded coach is sure to follow well, and is always pleasant to ride in; and

even with the top of the fore-wheel; but when the horse exerts his strength to move a load, he brings his breast so much nearer the ground, that the line of draught is almost horizontal, and in a line with its centre. The trace of a coach-horse, *when he stands at rest*, is also *oblique* to the horizon, and must be so with low fore-wheels; but it approaches the horizontal when he is at work, and the nearer it approaches to it the better. Horses draw by their weight, and not by the force of their muscles; the hinder feet, then, being the fulcrum of the lever by which their weight acts against a load, when they pull hard it depresses their chests—thus increasing the lever of its weight, and diminishing the lever by which the load resists its efforts.

as a weak child totters less when it has a weight on its head, coach-springs break less frequently with a moderately heavy and well-adjusted load than with a light one.

Allowance is made for the retarding power of friction in all kinds of machinery, and of course it is not overlooked in carriages. The coachman sees its effect every time he puts the drag-chain on his wheel, which merely decreases the velocity of his coach, by increasing the quantity of friction. Common-sense must likewise instruct him, that when two bodies are rubbing against each other in opposite directions—as the arm of an axletree and the iron-box of a wheel—the smoother these bodies can be made, the less, of course, is the friction. As economy in the expense of power is one of the chief objects of a mechanic, it is not to be wondered at that great pains have been taken in the construction of the axles and boxes of carriages. To Mr. Collinge are we chiefly indebted for his patent cylindrical axletree and box, which have stood the test of many years, and given universal satisfaction—for

the silent and steady motion they impart to the wheel—for their great strength and durability—and for carrying oil several thousand miles without the necessity of replenishing it. They are turned upon a lathe, case-hardened, and rendered as smooth on the surface as it is possible, in the existing state of the art, to render them. But as the expense of these boxes is too great for stage-coaches, patents have been taken out for others of a less costly nature, which answer extremely well, and have long since been in use on all the coaches that run from the Bull and Mouth, and many others besides. *No stage-coach can be safe without the patent boxes*, as they are termed, but there is a prejudice amongst proprietors against them. They certainly add to the cost, and also to the weight, of the coach; and by preventing the wheels from escaping any obstacle that may present itself—the consequence of their being air-tight—they wear out rather sooner than when used with the common axle. Their general adoption, however, would be a great safeguard to the public, as well as of considerable assistance to trade. In the mail-

coaches, the boxes are of a different construction, and owe their safety to four bolts, which pass completely through the nave of the wheel, having a square shoulder on the back of the nave, with screws and nuts on its front. We have no hesitation in saying, this is the best wheel ever put under a coach; and, of course, Mr. Vidler, the late contractor for the mails, had a patent for it. The mails could never do their work with the common axle and box.[1]

[1] An improvement on all the patents yet brought forth was some time since attempted by two spirited coach-makers in London, but we have not heard of its success. Its object is to diminish draught in two distinct ways—first, by reducing the bearing parts, and thereby lessening friction; and, secondly, by diminishing the 'dead hug,' as it is termed, which is always an attendant on the cylindrical arm and box. It substitutes a square instead of a cylindrical box, in which the cylindrical axle or arm works. This is made to fit on each of the four sides as true and as air-tight as if it were a complete circle: and if the four different bearings are but one eighth of an inch each, it is apparent that there is but half an inch of surface for the arm to oppose or work against in each axle; and so on in proportion to the size of the bearing. Nor is this all: those parts or angles not touched by the arm —as may be seen when the box is revolving—serve as reservoirs for oil, affording a constant supply. The

Cicero laments the want of post-offices, and well he might. Nothing can excel that department in our country, as it has long been administered by the late Sir Francis Freeling; although we feared in this, as in more important matters, we were about to lose sight of the good old rule of 'letting well alone.' It was said to have been the intention of Government to substitute light carriages with two horses, for the present mail-coaches drawn by four; but we had many suspicions as to the result of such a change. It is true, the persons that horse the mails cry out lustily against the Government for not remunerating them better for the increased speed at which they are now required to travel—the maximum price being tenpence a mile. Indeed, several proprietors have, in consequence of their losses, taken their horses off some of the mails; and others would refuse fresh contracts, unless more liberal terms were offered them. The Chester has already

nose of the arm is protected by a circular end, ground on to form the nicest fit, and prevent the possibility of the smallest particle of gravel finding its way into the box.

disappeared. These complaints have, no doubt, been troublesome—and, in some cases, perhaps, not quite reasonable; but we will state our reasons for thinking the present *system* cannot be improved upon.

First, the build of the mails is admirable for endurance. Why do we often hear of axletrees and other parts giving way with stage-coaches, and scarcely ever in the mails? Simply because the sustaining powers of the latter are more equal to the weight, and *they cannot lose their wheels.* Moreover, they are excellently adapted for quick travelling; the centre of gravity being low—and now still lower in those furnished by the new contractor, the term of Mr. Vidler's contract having expired—and they are light in comparison with stage-coaches that run as fast as they do: indeed, amongst coachmen, they are slightingly termed 'paper carts,' in reference to comparative weight, and their great speed on the road. When the mail-coach of the present day starts from London for Edinburgh, a man may safely bet a hundred to one that she arrives to her time; but let a light two-horse vehicle set out on the

same errand, and the betting would strangely alter.

It is quite a mistaken notion, that a carriage is less liable to accidents for being *light*. On the contrary, she is more liable to them than one that is well laden *in proportion to her sustaining powers*. In the latter case, she runs steadily along, and is but little disturbed by any obstacle or jerk she may meet on the road; in the former she is constantly on 'the jump,' as coachmen call it, and her iron parts very liable to snap. Our present mail-coach work reflects the highest credit on the state of our roads, and everything connected with them. It will be borne in mind that, with one or two exceptions, they all begin their journey at night, and those which perform very long distances have two nights to one day; yet, see the wonderful regularity with which they arrive, and the few bad accidents they meet with! But, indeed, all our night-travelling in England is deserving of high praise for the expedition and regularity with which it is conducted; and, we have reason to believe, fewer accidents happen to night-coaches than to such as run by

day. This, however, may be accounted for. Barring fogs, it matters not how dark a night is, as our lamps supply the light of the sun; and, taking the average of nights, have a preference over the moon. Coachmen—now always sober—are then more careful and less given to *larking*, and the road is generally clear of any carriages but those which travel with lights. Horses also run more steadily by night, and certainly with more ease; it is a very common case to hear a coachman say, such a horse is 'a good night horse, but an indifferent one by day.' Some cannot bear a hot sun on their backs; and those whose wind is not so good as it should be, run with much greater ease by night.

It is, indeed, gratifying to contemplate the change that has lately taken place in the whole system of *the road*; and it is a most *humane one*. The old-fashioned coachman to a heavy coach—and they were all heavy down to very recent times—bore some analogy with the prize-fighter, for he stood highest who could hit hardest. He was generally a man of large frame, made larger by indulgence, and of great bodily

power—which was useful to him. To the button-hole of his coat were appended several whipcord points, which he was sure to have occasion for on the road, for his horses were whipped till whipping was as necessary to them as their harness. In fair play to him, however, he was not solely answerable for this: the spirit of his cattle was broken by the task they were called to perform—for in those days twenty-mile stages were in fashion; and what was the consequence? Why, the four-horse whip and the Nottingham whipcord were of no avail over the latter part of the ground, and something like a cat-o'-nine-tails was produced out of the boot, which was jocularly called 'the apprentice'—and a shrewd apprentice it was to the art of torturing, which was inflicted on the wheelers without stint or measure; but without which the coach might have been often left on the road. One circumstance alone saved these horses from destruction; this was the frequency of ale-houses on the road, not one of which could then be passed without a call.

Still our old-fashioned coachman was a scientific man in his calling—more so, per-

haps, than by far the greater part of his brethren of the present day, in as much as his energies and skill were more frequently put to the test. He had heavy loads, bad roads, and weary horses to deal with, neither was any part of his harness to be depended on, upon a pinch. Then the box he sat upon was worse than Pandora's, with all the evils it contained, for even *hope* appeared to have deserted it. It rested on the bed of the axletree, and shook the frame to atoms; but when prayers were put up to have it altered, the proprietors said, 'No; the rascal will always be asleep if we place his box on the springs.' If, among all these difficulties, then, he by degrees became a drunkard, who can wonder at his becoming so? But he was *a coachman.* He could fetch the last ounce out of a wheel-horse by the use of his double thong, or his *apprentice*, and the point of his lash told terribly upon his leaders. He likewise applied it scientifically; it was directed under the bar of the flank, and after the third hit he brought it up to his hand by *the draw*, so that it never got entangled in the pole-chains, or in any part of the

harness. He could untie a knot with his teeth and tie another with his tongue, as well as he could with his hands; and if his thong broke off in the middle, he could splice it with dexterity, and even with neatness, as his coach was proceeding on its journey. In short, he could do what coachmen of the present day cannot do, because they have not been called upon to do it; and he likewise could do what they never try to do—namely, he could drive when he was drunk nearly as well as when he was sober. He was very frequently a faithful servant to his employers; considered trustworthy by bankers and others in the country through which he passed; and as humane to his horses, perhaps, as the adverse circumstances he was placed in by his masters would admit.

It has been suggested to road surveyors, that, if they would leave a narrow slip of loose gravel on the near side of severe hills, or those of only moderate declivity where the fall is a long one, and the road hard, it would save innumerable accidents in the course of the year, as the moment a coachman found his coach was getting the

better of his horses—or should any part of his tackle give way—he could run her into the gravel, and her velocity would be almost instantly checked. If placed on the near or left-hand side of the road, it would not inconvenience carriages *ascending* the hills; and the attention of a labourer, about every third day, to keep the gravel in its place, would obviate every difficulty. Likewise, it is desirable that roads should be raised a little to meet a coach, as it were, in the turns, especially such as are at the bottom of a hill. For example, if the turn is to the right, the left side of the road should be the highest, so as to give support to a coach in preserving her centre of gravity. Be it remembered, that if the body of a coach could be made to lock *with the carriage*, she would go round a corner at full speed without danger; but as that cannot be done, too much precaution cannot be used when turning her from her line. Only a few years back, the Kingston and Worcester mail was upset in going round a turn, where the road was in an opposite form to the one we have just pointed out, when, according to evidence produced, she was going at

the rate of only six miles in the hour. The effects of this accident were dreadful. In one respect, however, roads are more safe than they were, being no longer rounded in the middle, which caused the overthrow of many coaches in the act of crossing them, and the ruin of many coach-horses, by straining them in the fetlock-joint.

The hills on our great roads are now so cut through, that coaches ascend nearly all of them in the trot. Indeed, coachmen have found out that their horses are gainers here, as in the trot every horse does his share; whereas very few teams are all at work together when walking. Four weak horses, well put together, will draw *a very heavy load* up a hill of considerable acclivity, if the surface be hard, and they are kept to a trot. As a mechanical agent, the worst method in which the strength of a horse can be applied, is carrying a weight up hill; and the best, that of drawing it. We should, however, give him every advantage; and, with a loaded coach, 'keeping her alive,' as coachmen translate the *vis vivida* of the mechanic, is of vast importance in the draught of her.

We have now only one more hint to offer as to stage-coaches. Proprietors should never, if they can avoid it, suffer two coachmen to drive the same horses; either each man should drive his own ground double, or he should go the journey throughout and return the next day. It cannot be expected that horses can do well in the hands of two coachmen, even allowing them equal merits; and for these plain reasons: they not only feel the effect of change of hands, which ruffles them, but they know not what to be at in their work; one makes his play, as it is called, over one part of the ground, the other over another part. The system also destroys the pride a coachman takes in seeing his stock look well; and, if anything goes wrong, a wrangle is sure to be the consequence. As it is ascertained that no horse can run *at the top of his speed* more than seven or eight miles without injury, it is much better that a coachman should work his ground double—that is, with the same team down and up—if the hour suits, than that another man should touch them.[1]

[1] So material, indeed, is this point considered by one of our best judges of road coach-work, that he denies

Some persons object to two sweats a day, but it is nonsense; how does the race-horse run his heats? and how many sweats does a roadster or a hunter get on the same day? In very fast work, it is better for cattle to run five miles *in and out*, with an hour or two of rest between being taken from one coach and put to the other, than nine miles straight on end.

A wonderful change has taken place in the English coach-horse, as well as the sort of horses put into other kinds of harness; but this has been progressive. Fifty years ago, the idea of putting a thorough-bred horse into harness would have been considered preposterous. In the carriages of our noblemen and gentlemen, the long-tailed black, or Cleveland bay—each one remove from the cart-horse—was the prevailing sort, and six miles an hour the extent of his pace; and he cost from thirty pounds to fifty pounds. A few years back, a nobleman gave seven hundred guineas for a horse to draw his cabriolet: two hundred

the possibility of any coach keeping its exact time over a long distance of ground, unless each man drives his own horses, with short stages for each team.

guineas is now an everyday price for a horse of this description, and a hundred and fifty for a gentleman's coach-horse! Indeed, a pair of handsome coach-horses, fit for London, and well broken and bitted, cannot be purchased *under* two hundred guineas; and even job-masters often give much more for them to let out to their customers. In harness, also, we think we have arrived at perfection, to which the invention of the patent shining leather has mainly contributed. A handsome horse, well harnessed, is a noble sight; and is it not extraordinary that in no country but England is the art of putting horses into harness generally understood? Independently of the workmanship of the harness-maker, if our road-horses were put to their coaches in the loose, awkward fashion of the Continent, we could never travel at the rate we do. It is the command given over the coach-horse that *alone* enables us to do it.

We may as well say a word or two as to private vehicles ere we close. As a facsimile of the gentleman's family-coach of fifty years back is now become difficult to produce, we will describe it. It had a most

comfortable and roomy body, quite fit to contain six portly persons, and suspended by long leather braces, affixed to nearly upright springs. To enable the body to hang low, the perch of a bent form, called the compass perch, was used; and the carriage was of great length and strength. In fact it was, coachman and all, in strict accordance with the animals that drew it, and came under the denomination of 'slow and easy.' The fashionable open carriage of this day was a still more unsightly object—the high, single-bodied phaeton, all upon the fore-wheels, and looking as if the hinder ones had nothing to do but to follow. This was the favourite carriage of the late King, when Prince of Wales, and was commonly driven, by such as could afford it, with four horses in hand. Indeed, it may almost be said to have given birth to our gentleman-coachmanship, as well as to the well-known doggerel epigram:—

'What can Tommy Onslow do?
He can drive a phaeton and two.
Can Tommy Onslow do no more?
Yes—*he can drive a phaeton and four*!'

The phaeton was succeeded by the no

less classically yclept curricle—a carriage, when properly appointed, and followed by two well-dressed and well-mounted grooms, of singular elegance certainly. It had a long run in the fashionable world; but being, like the phaeton, only calculated to carry two persons, and requiring never less than three horses, taxation and economy put an end to it. Then came the reign of the gig. The curate's wife, a gouty attorney, or a rich old farmer, fifty years ago, might be seen boxed up in a whiskey—which, being hung on hind and fore-braces, with a head to protect its inmates from weather, made a convenient family conveyance, and —with a steady dobbin to draw it—a safe one. Economy induced a leader of *ton* to cast favouring eyes on this snug whiskey; and thence the airy gig, which, with a hundred-guinea horse in it, has been the best friend to doctors and undertakers they have ever yet found. The race has multiplied, and many names and varieties have been adopted in succession. The quiet movement of their wheels, the nice equilibrium in which they are placed on the axle, the evenness of their motion by reason

of their being detached from their shafts, and the ease with which they follow the horse, make gigs delightful carriages to ride in, and we could wish they were not so dangerous. The stanhope, so named after the Honourable Fitzroy Stanhope, who planned it, succeeded the tilbury, so called from the well-known coach-maker; and the cost, without harness, of either may be about seventy pounds. Now 'every dog has his day,' and so have our prevailing fashions. The buggy, stanhope, dennet, and tilbury have all, during some seasons past, been supplanted by the cabriolet for town work, for which we must allow it is far more suitable—though much too heavy for the road. In London, this has been seen at the opera, at the theatres, at the club-houses, and at dinner-parties, with a neat little urchin on the foot-board, performing all the offices of the chariot with not a third of its expenses. The English cabriolet, however, is rather on the decline in the fashionable world, and the light and airy tilbury is making its appearance again.

For country work nearly all these open vehicles have given place to the double-

bodied phaeton and the britscka, both of which are much used in travelling post. The former is likewise in vogue with citizens and others who have families, and is now made so light as to be drawn by one horse with four persons in it with ease, for a limited number of miles. Descending still lower in the scale, and only one remove from the donkey-cart, is what is called the pony-chaise, out of which more people have been killed than we should like to enumerate here. These vehicles, by far the most dangerous carriages of the whole family they belong to, are so light that an animal even of little power can do what he pleases with them; they are also obliged to be made so short in the carriage that the least thing upsets them, while the persons in them are not out of reach of heels. Should the animal be alarmed and endeavour to run away, the lowness and lightness of the vehicle nearly destroy all power of resistance; indeed, if he have much power, a carriage of this description may be compared to a canister tied to a dog's tail.[1]

[1] Accidents by these carriages frequently arise from apparently an unknown cause; it is by no means

The taste for the *whip* has undoubtedly declined; and at one time, perhaps, it occupied more attention among the higher classes of society than we ever wish to see it do again. Yet, taken in moderation, we can perceive no reason to condemn this branch of sport more than others. If so great a personage as Sophocles could think it fitting to display his science in public, in the trifling game of ball, why may not an English gentleman exercise his skill on a coach-box? If the Athenians, the most polished nation of all antiquity, deemed it *an honour* to be considered skilful charioteers, why should Englishmen con-

generally known that horses frequently begin kicking or plunging in consequence of some part of their harness pinching them, but which their drivers are quite unconscious of at the time. Thus a coach-horse is frequently set kicking by merely a twist in his trace. Many accidents, however, arise from using horses not properly broken to harness, as well as from the inexperience of drivers. We have all heard of the young Oxonian who prevailed on his uncle to accompany him in his gig to Oxford. In passing through Kensington, the old gentleman observed he had paid his nephew a great compliment, for that was only the *fifth* time he had ever been in a gig in his life. The nephew replied that his horse beat him hollow, *for he had never been in one at all before that day*!

sider it a disgrace? To be serious—our amateur or *gentlemen-coachmen* have done much good: the road would never have been what it now is, but for the encouragement they gave, by their notice and support, to all persons connected with it. Would the Holyhead road have been what it is, had there been no such persons as the Hon. Thomas Kenyon, Sir Henry Parnell, and Mr. Maddox? Would the Oxford coachmen have set so good an example as they have done to their brethren of 'the bench,' had there been no such men on their road as Sir Henry Peyton, Lord Clonmell, the late Sir Thomas Mostyn, that Nestor of coachmen, Mr. Annesley, and the late Mr. Harrison of Shelswell?[1]

[1] '*Mr. Charles Holmes and the Blenheim Coach.*—Nimrod, in his Northern Tour last month, got upon his favourite subject, the road; and we were glad to see it, because we think occasional notices of the different coachmen, and the turns-out from the various establishments, are calculated to afford an additional stimulus to all persons of the same class, and also to promote the public service in the coaching department. We have much pleasure, therefore, in recording a very handsome and flattering compliment that has been recently paid to Mr. Charles Holmes, the driver and part proprietor of the Blenheim coach (from Wood-

Would not the unhappy coachmen of five-and-twenty years back have gone on, wearing out their breeches with the bumping of the

stock to London) to celebrate the completion of his twentieth year on that well-appointed coach, a period that has elapsed without a single accident to his coach, his passengers, or himself, and during which time, with the exception of a very short absence from indisposition, he has driven his sixty-five miles every day, making somewhere about twenty-three thousand miles a year. The numerous patrons of the coach entered into a subscription to present him with a piece of plate; and accordingly a beautiful cup, bearing the shape of an antique vase, and cover, ornamented with rich handles, composed of scrolls and foliage, the cover surmounted by a beautifully modelled horse, with a coach and four horses on one side, and a suitable inscription on the other, was presented to Mr. Holmes by that staunch patron of the road, Sir Henry Peyton, Bart., in August last, at a dinner at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's Street, to which between forty and fifty gentlemen sat down. The cup was manufactured by Messrs. Green & Ward, and the list of subscribers amounted to upwards of two hundred and fifty, including among others the Duke of Wellington, and indeed all persons of rank, business, or pleasure, whose vocations call them in the direction that the coach travels. We see by *Bell's Life in London*, a paper that has uniformly devoted itself to the patronage of this useful class of men, that a handsome salver is yet to be presented to this fortunate and deserving coachman, at Oxford. We feel assured that this flattering distinction will have its due influence in all

old coach-box, and their stomachs with brandy, had not Mr. Ward of Squerries, after many a weary endeavour, persuaded the proprietors to place their boxes upon springs—the plan for accomplishing which was suggested by Mr. Roberts, nephew to the then proprietor of the White Horse, Fetter Lane, London, but now of the Royal Hotel, Calais? What would the Devonshire road have been, but for the late Sir Charles Bamfylde, Sir John Rogers, Colonel Prouse, Sir Lawrence Palk, and others? Have the advice and the practice of such experienced men as Mr. Charles Buxton, Mr. Henry Villebois, Mr. Okeover, Sir Bellingham Graham, Mr. John Walker, Lord Sefton, Sir Felix Agar,[1] Mr. Ackers, Mr. Maxse,

parts of the country, and we wish Mr. Holmes many years of health and prosperity to enjoy the reward of his long and meritorious services.'—Extract from the *New Sporting Magazine*, for November 1835, p. 68.

[1] Perhaps one of the finest specimens of good coachmanship was performed by Sir Felix Agar. He made a bet, which he won, that he would drive his own four-horses-in-hand up Grosvenor Place, down the passage into Tattersall's Yard, around the pillar which stands in the centre of it, and back again into Grosvenor Place, *without either of his horses going in a slower pace than a trot.*

Hon. Fitzroy Stanhope, Colonel Spicer, Colonel Sibthorpe, *cum multis aliis*, been thrown away upon persons who have looked up to them as protectors? Certainly not: neither would the improvement in carriages —stage-coaches more especially— have arrived at its present height, but for the attention and suggestions of such persons as we have been speaking of.

Gentleman-coaching, however, has, as we said, received a check; and in more ways than one. 'Tampering with the currency,' and low prices, have taken off the leaders; and the bars and four-horse whips are hung up for the present—very few four-in-hands being visible.[1] The 'B. D. C.,' or Benson Driving Club, which still holds its rendezvous at the Black Dog, Bedfont, is the only survivor of those numerous driving associations whose processions used, some twenty years ago, to be among the most imposing, as well as peculiar, spectacles in and about the metropolis.

The fashion, however, was not one of

[1] Only ten years back, there were from thirty to forty four-in-hand equipages to be seen constantly about town :—*one* is stared at *now* !

venerable standing among us—gentlemen-coachmen not having been known in England for more than about half a century. We believe we ourselves remember the Anglo-Ericthonius—the late Hon. Charles Finch, brother to the late Earl of Aylesford, who used to drive his own coach-and-four, disguised in a livery great coat. Soon after his *début*, however, the celebrated 'Tommy Onslow,' Sir John Lade, and others, mounted the box in their own character. Sir John was esteemed a renowned judge of coach-horses and carriages, and a good coachman of the old school; but everything connected with the coach-box has undergone such a change in the last twenty-five years, that the Nestors of the art are no longer to be quoted. Mr. Warde, *the father of the field*, may now, we believe, be called *the father of the road* also; and if the old heavy Gloucester 'six insides, and sixteen out, with two tons of luggage,' were to reappear on the road, no man's advice would be better than his.

Count Pecchio, whose little volume on England lately appeared, has a luculent

chapter on the astonishing convenience of our public conveyances, and the finished elegance of our private ones. We hardly, indeed, know which of the two things is more likely to strike the imagination of a foreigner, no matter from what part of the world he may come. Any one who has been accustomed to admire the muster of vehicles at the Tuilleries, must indeed open his eyes wide the first time he is in St. James's Street on the day of a levee or drawing-room. Hyde Park, however, on any fine afternoon, in the height of the London season, will be more than enough to confound him. He will there see what no other country under the heavens can show him, and what is more, we may venture to add, what no other country ever will show him. Let him only sit on the rail near our Great Captain's statue, with his watch in his hand, and in the space of two hours he will see a thousand well-appointed equipages pass before him to the Mall, in all the pomp of aristocratic pride, and in which the very horses themselves appear to partake. Everything he sees is peculiar: the silent roll and easy

motion of the London-built carriage,—the *style* of the coachmen; it is hard to determine which shine brightest, the lace on their clothes, their own round faces, or their flaxen wigs,—the pipe-clayed reins—pipe-clayed lest they should soil the clean white gloves; the gigantic young fellows, in huge cocked-hats bedaubed with lace, in laced silk stockings, new kid gloves, and with gold-headed canes, who tower above 'Mr. Coachman's' head; not forgetting the spotted coach-dog, which has just been washed for the occasion. The *vis-à-vis*, containing nobody but a single fair dame, with all its *set-out*, has cost at least a thousand pounds; and the stream of equipages of all calibres—barouches, chariots, cabriolets, etc., almost all got up, as Mr. Robins's advertisements say, 'regardless of expense,'[1]

[1] Already, however, like all other trades, coach-making is on the wane. Two years back, the town-coach could not be had under four hundred guineas. Three hundred is the price now. The travelling-chariot, with everything complete, could not be purchased under three hundred and eighty guineas; three hundred will now suffice. The town-cabriolet, with patent boxes to the wheels, commenced at a hundred and fifty guineas; a hundred and twenty is now the figure: and so with all the rest of the tribe.

flows on unbroken, until it is half-past seven, and people at last must begin to think of what they still call *dinner*. Old Seneca tells us such a blaze of splendour was once to be seen on the Appian Way. It might be so: it is now to be seen nowhere but in London.

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